

# Birla Central Library

PILANI (Jaipur State)

Class No :- 920

Book No :- A423M

Accession No :- 12528





**MEN AND SUPERMEN  
OF HINDUSTAN**





# MEN AND SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

BY  
JOACHIM ALVA

ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
G. V. CHANDWADKAR  
STAFF-ARTIST, BOMBAY CHRONICLE

BOMBAY  
THACKER & CO. LTD.

1943

FIRST PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 1943

*Copyright*

*The Publishers are not responsible for the views expressed  
by the author.*

*Printed by V. R. Savant, at the Associated Advertisers and Printers, Ltd.,  
505, Arthur Road, Tardeo, Bombay 7, and published by C. Murphy,  
Manager, Thacker & Co., Ltd. Rampart Row, Fort, Bombay.*

## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

*Born on January 21, 1907 in the temple-studded town of Udipi, on the West Coast, Joachim Alva has been a turbulent student leader, a militant teetotaler and non-smoker, a prize-winning orator, the first and only Christian Secretary of the Bombay Students' Brotherhood in its fifty years of existence, an intrepid pioneer of the youth movement, "baptised" in the first police lathi charge in the*



THE AUTHOR

*city on Jatin Das Day, then became the father of the once banned Nationalist Christian Party, ending up as a Congress "Dictator" when "War Councils" and "Dictators" overran Bombay.*

*When young Alva was once pouring out his heart in his maiden public speech, Sarojini Naidu, the Nightingale of India, surprised at the student-politician's eloquence, turned round and asked "Who is this Edmund Burke?" Joachim Alva's powerful tongue and big voice won for him many a first-prize for extempore speech-making, especially in the Government Law College, Bombay, and secured for him outright the gold medal and the first place of honour in the All-India Oratorical Competition held at the Benares University. A product of the Italian and Mangalorean Jesuits and a by-product of the Spanish Jesuits in Bombay, his Alma Mater, the St. Xavier's College, Bombay, wrote him up as the "best speaker of the year" and "a budding orator"; but expelled him overnight for his resolution to throw open the annual Catholic Students' social to the students of all communities. Quite a sensation followed, and Bombay's papers were provoked into angry editorials.*

*Alva kicked off his studies and suffered imprisonment and then returned to the Law College wherein "originated the Bombay Law College romance" to quote the words of the toast-master, Bhulabhai Desai. Mrs. Violet Alva is herself a Congresswoman, a gifted platform speaker in English and Hindustani, a writer, the ablest woman at the Bombay Bar and richer by one more University degree than her husband!*

*When Alva entered the profession barely seven years ago with an unprecedented splash, judges and politicians, journalists and lawyers foregathered to fetter him and wish him good luck. Now he has blossomed into one of the foremost criminal lawyers of the city, having figured as the successful defence counsel in several sensational trials. Whilst boldly championing the causes of his clients, Advocate Alva has been known for his terrific clashes in the courts, once running the gauntlet of arrest in open court for sheer defiance!*

*As a student, he indulged in endless oratory and proved a valuable campaigner. He played not a small part in making the Bombay Youth League the most powerful influence in Bombay before the end of the thirties. As a Congress candidate contesting the Bombay City Christian constituency he failed, but only after a gruelling agitation for Nationalism before every Church-front and chawl-corner of the city. He is now recognised as the pluckiest and most notable Indian Christian patriot and leader. His political activities twice took him to jail and he suffered an aggregate term of three years imprisonment. Cut off from the outside world in the famed Yeravda Central Prison he planned ambitious books to while away his time and expended a colossal amount of labour. Charged with "impertinence to the Superintendent" and "unauthorised writings" in the Nasik Jail, "Convict" Alva's two valuable manuscripts were confiscated, one being Indian Christians and Nationalism. He was punished braving the contingency of flogging and solitary confinement! Undismayed, the author has now rewritten his sketches during the last year and Men and Supremen of Hindustan is the result.*

*Dedicated*  
*to the vast multitude of*  
*Our C Class Political Prisoners*  
*known and unknown*  
*whose sacrifice and suffering inside the Indian prisons*  
*have ennobled and greatly advanced the cause of Indian Independence.*  
*Incidentally this humble writer fervently hopes that his two little boys*  
*Niranjan Thomas and Chittaranjan Francis*  
*will not fail to join our band of warriors*  
*if the freedom of their beloved Motherland is not achieved*  
*before they enter upon their youth.*



# CONTENTS



	PAGE
ALI, MAULANA MAHOMED .. .. .	1
AMBEDKAR, DR. B. R. .. .. .	17
ANDREWS, CHARLES F. .. .. .	27
AZAD, MAULANA ABUL KALAM .. .. .	41
BAPTISTA, JOSEPH .. .. .	53
BARODA, SAYAJI RAO, GAEKWAR OF .. .. .	73
DESAI, BHULABHAI JIVANJI .. .. .	89
GANDHI, MAHATMA .. .. .	107
GIDNEY, SIR HENRY .. .. .	139
HAILEY, LORD .. .. .	151
HORNIMAN, BENJAMIN GUY .. .. .	173
JAYAKAR, MUKUND RAMRAO .. .. .	191
JINNAH, MAHOMED ALI .. .. .	207
KHAN, KHAN ABDUL GHAFAR .. .. .	227
KHER, BAL GANGADHAR .. .. .	243
MIRABEN .. .. .	255
NAIDU, SAROJINI .. .. .	267
NARIMAN, KHURSHED FRAMJI .. .. .	279
NEHRU, PANDIT JAWAHARLAL .. .. .	295
NEHRU, PANDIT MOTILAL .. .. .	317
PATEL, SIRDAR VALLABHBHAI .. .. .	335
RADHAKRISHNAN, SIR SARVEPALLI .. .. .	349
RAMAN, SIR C. V. .. .. .	361
SHANKAR, UDAY .. .. .	373
TAGORE, RABINDRANATH .. .. .	385





## PREFACE

---

Men and Supermen of Hindustan *is the resurrection of an annihilated body. The present one is a poor copy of the original ; for gone are those happy days when a prisoner shut up in his cell indulged in the glorious pastime of reading and writing, undisturbed by the noise of the world outside. The happiness would have been complete if the gaol-keepers had not laid their rough hands upon, and ruthlessly destroyed the manuscripts.*

*The list of contents is done alphabetically to avoid the peril of precedence ! However there would be no difficulty in assigning for all time the first place of honour to Mahatma Gandhi. The list includes men and women who have influenced the destinies of Hindustan for good or evil since India declared her Independence at Lahore on the last day of the last month of 1929. The list will not satisfy anybody much less does it satisfy the author. There are many grave omissions ; but weariness creeps over the flesh of even an author and I had to cry a halt. I hope the second volume will fill in the gaps.*

*But nothing can justify the omission of three conspicuous names—Subhas Chandra Bose, Jaiprakash Narayan and Bhagat Singh. The first is an “outlaw”, the second has escaped the law and the last defied the law ! The votaries of law warned me that if I added these three names this book would never see the light of day ! Hence their omission, and I hope to be forgiven for not writing about them as mine was the happiness to know the first, the joy to be the jail companion of the second and the loss not to have seen or known the last, who was the representative of the immortal race of Sikhs.*





MAULANA MAHOMED ALI



## MAULANA MAHOMED ALI

**I**F "the terrible is that which repels and attracts," as Ibsen spoke through one of his heroines, then Maulana Mahomed Ali was an asset to our public life. A brilliant antithesis, a compound of contradictions of all that we hate and desire, he cannot be described without a flagrant mixture of metaphors and contradictory terms. The Maulana was mild and wild, docile and dogged, impulsive and repulsive, discerning and indiscreet, constitutionalist and seditionist, nationalist and communalist, inter-nationalist and pan-Islamist. Being a superabundance of activity he loved to roll in the high waters of democratic licence and backwaters of reactionary stagnation—as long as both moved him into action. He was a strange compound of strength and weakness and his mind presented a field of warring motives and varying loves. He scattered his loves and hatreds with ferocious magnificence. The deluge of his sympathies and antipathies spared none. His speeches were all questions, no answers. Above all, the Maulana was lovable though terrible in his nature. A fire-brand throughout his life, he mellowed towards the end and died with a halo of glory around his volcanic personality. He could be characterised like that great Parliamentary Charles James Fox, "all fire and simplicity and sweet temper."

Mahomed Ali started his strange and stormy career as a flaming defender of his faith, developed into a turbulent nationalist, deteriorated into an aggressive communalist and ended an unabashed pan-Islamist. Legion were the causes he espoused with his fiery enthusiasm and numerous the instruments he forged, which however, recoiled on him and recognized not their creator. He always

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

moved through the smoke of battle and rode Indian politics like a whirlwind, "ready to do battle for an egg or die for an idea." He never skulked in his tent when he got beaten, but instantly girded up his loins for another encounter. He ever longed to die on the battle-field and the idea of passing away from a mere sick-bed must have chilled him. No martyr's crown nor patriot's laurel awaited him, though all the world served as witness of his death.

His spirit was irrepressible and he would transport us into alpine altitudes of joy at one moment and bring us down into the ocean of despair at another. His tumultuous spirit thrust him in the front rank of Indian politics, where it was at all times action, without reflection. He was turbulent and self-willed and nobody secured his lasting allegiance. Sometimes, his conscience must have told him what that noble warrior, General Gordon, must have told himself: "I know if I were "chief," I would never employ myself; for I am incorrigible."

The Maulana breathed fire and brimstone in his speeches. They meant death and destruction to his enemies. "At ev'ry word, a reputation dies." By his words he not only used whips but scorpions. His eloquence possessed the impetuosity of the mountain stream speeding towards the mouth of the river. The barbaric brilliance of his tongue recalled that of Henry Grattan—"a combination of cloud, whirlwind and flame." Every sentence that Mahomed Ali uttered was fervent and impassioned. Vehemence and dare-devilry were the weapons of his attack. "For fierce, vengeful, and irresistible assault," the Maulana's tongue possessed no rival. English and Urdu flowed from his mouth like a raging torrent and thus he swayed whole multitudes. The initial triumphs of the Khilafat campaign must be assigned to the power of his rhetoric. He spoke and wrote the English language exceedingly well; and it was an Englishman who remarked after

his death that there were no Indians and few Englishmen who wielded the English tongue as well as the Maulana.

Mahomed Ali was an inveterate hater of shams and hypocrisies. He asserted his loves and expressed his hatreds in a downright brutal manner. Discretion or indiscretion, he would be out with anything! Combative in his nature, he would dash forth to attack with blunt and primitive weapons. Lord John Russel, the paragon of mildness in the parliament of Disraeli was once accused of "the cant of patriotism." With his characteristic mildness, he turned back and replied "there's also such a thing as the recant of patriotism." If Mahomed Ali were in the seat of Lord John Russel, he wouldn't have been content with calling a spade a spade! He would have rushed in some such strain: "Treacherous, unpatriotic and wicked set of fellows, masquerading as gentlemen accuse others of the cant of patriotism. They deserve to be hanged like ordinary felons!" If ever he was attacked, he hit out hard blows, staggering his opponent with his incessant fire of defiance; he never entered the Legislative Assembly though he could have simply walked through any constituency for the mere asking. Had he lived, he would not have fallen from grace like his brother, for the younger brother, Shaukat Ali, did not remain a loyal adherent of the Mahatma throughout in respect of the boycott of legislatures. When, however, he once went down to the Assembly he declared that he had gone there, "only to look down upon the members and to amuse himself with the doings of pigmies." If he opened fire upon Liberals and the crowd of Moderates he would not be satisfied with a general onslaught. He would pick out some leading names, describe their multitudinous activities, pleasant or unpleasant—the time they spent at Government Houses, the number of dinners and luncheons they gulped down at Viceregal Lodge and mention the amount of pecuniary aid they were out to secure through their jobs by playing the ignoble



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

parts of "traitors to their country!" Maulana Mahomed Ali, ever ready to "wield a dread thunderbolt in his tongue," reminds us of the late President Theodore Roosevelt who would thus damn the Editor of a journal :—

"The editor of your paper Sir, is an infamous scoundrel and unmitigated liar. Yes Sir, that is what he is; but I know you can't help it. All heaven and earth couldn't keep him from being what he is. Be good enough to tell him I said this."

Mahomed Ali's outspokenness created a stir, at least, on one memorable occasion. His colleagues at the first sessions of the Indian Round Table Conference at London must have been flabbergasted when he told the plain truth: "Whose delegates we are, we do not know! I do not pretend to represent anybody." He preserved no secrets and employed no cunning. As an incorrigible wielder of bitter words, the art of diplomacy was alien to his nature. "There is no arguing with Johnson," exclaimed Goldsmith in despair, "for, if his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the butt end of it."

Heroics were also a part of his stock-in-trade. When Indian troops were despatched to China, Mahomed Ali proclaimed that he would lie down on the rails to be run over by the train that transported the troops. But nothing happened either to the train or the life of Mahomed Ali, and he slept quite soundly after that! When the Civil Disobedience campaign was launched and the Press Ordinance enacted, the Journalists' Association of Delhi protested and passed a resolution to temporarily suspend newspapers. The Maulana came out with his pompous ultimatum that he "would break the back of the movement." It flourished despite his frowns.

Mahomed Ali shot forth in the arena of Indian politics like a meteor and riveted all eyes on him. He entered the field of nationalist politics by the religious back door. He dragged his community along with him at

## MAULANA MAHOMED ALI

a time when it felt timid and shy of any kind of political action. Its imperative need was brains like the Maulana's to raise it to a status of equality with other fighting units of the country. Mere members didn't then mean anything; they required voice and expression. Marx told the First International that "numbers weigh only in the balance if united by combination and led by knowledge." The Muslims needed leaders of the grit and stamina of Mahomed Ali and thus Modern Muslim India offered an easy sphere for his conquest. Before the advent of the Aligarh-Oxonian in Indian politics, Muslims were known to be mild and yielding unto a point of flunkeyism. The breath of sedition had not till then passed over them. It was left to Mahomed Ali to sow the seeds of defiance in his fold against constituted authority. The lure of office which later on distinctly separated the chaff from the wheat of the community, then held no allurements for him. Armed with his deadly pen and biting tongue, alongside his "Big Brother," Shaukat Ali, he poured forth the religious fire by which he hoped to storm the batteries of the bureaucracy into submission. It was on a religious issue that he challenged the rulers and speedily found for himself a place in the sun! He spread discontent amongst his co-religionists and gave it shape and organised voice. He stirred the Muslims from comparative lethargy into dynamic action. The Muslims hailed him as their saviour and were prepared to brave anything for him. One of the Jail Officials, who served in Sind where the Ali Brothers were imprisoned told the present writer that all the jail officials would have been burnt alive had they not one night produced the brothers from their cells for exhibition to an infuriated crowd when false stories of the deaths of the incarcerated brothers were spread. This timely act or concession on the part of the Hyderabad Jail Officials, forcibly granted to save their necks brought down on their heads the wrath of the higher authorities!

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

They deemed it an act of weakness "and would not have cared a jot, if a bit of 'Dyerism' was imported!"

The Maulana's pen made him known to the literate Muslims all over the country and his tempestuous rhetoric spread like wildfire amongst the masses. None amongst the Muslims ever wrote with his daring which soon made him to be dreaded by the powers that be. He was also capable of hard work without much reliance on inspiration. Fancy Mahomed Ali sitting out at a stretch for thirty-six hours to finish an article of thirty-six pages for the *Comrade*, warning the British on the eve of their declaration of hostilities against Turkey. His Congress Presidential address at Cocanada ran into 143 pages—the longest on record. He roused the Muslims to a degree unattained either before or after him, with the result that the bureaucracy suppressed his journals just before his internment. There is the unforgettable irony of fate that the first victim of the Press Act of 1910 was Mahomed Ali, who had supported this Draconian measure in his *Comrade*.

The two brothers created a historical record when they traversed the country from end to end, preaching the gospel of resistance to British rule, which produced the tornado of Khilafat and Non-Co-operation agitation. They were then out to move mountains with their frenzied zeal and herculean energies. Together they plunged outright in the epic fight of Non-Co-operation, the first organised effort made since the days of the Mutiny to deal a blow at British domination. Their whirlwind propaganda tossed crowds to and fro and rendered the administration of the country a difficult problem.

The venerable mother of the Ali brothers was no small inspiration to the pair of untamed lions. Bi Aman was the driving force of their alliance with Mahatma Gandhi in the eventful days of Non-Co-operation. Her

soul burned with the injustices of the Khilafat wrongs and all her animosity was stirred up. "Old and palsied as these hands are," she uttered her warning to her darling sons, "I shall have the necks of my boys wrung if they talk of compromise." After the death of their aged and most respected mother, the brothers turned their backs on Gandhi and sowed the seeds of discord. Despite their desertion, Mahatma Gandhi declared his willingness to embrace them and said that "though they had fallen out of his pocket, they were welcome at any moment." The lion and the lamb did not seem to lie down together any more! With the all-powerful influence of their mother removed, the Ali Brothers failed to put their weight in the scales of nationalism when their *guru* waged the biggest fight of his life at Dandi. They razed the edifice of their national service to the ground, so industriously built up by Bi Aman.

What he denied his country, he seemed to grant to Islam. The Maulana was one of the living forces of the Muslim world. We have it on his own word that he did not sleep for nights together when Turkey entered the Great War. He voiced the grievances of his co-religionists with a fervour and strength 'unmatched by any other Muslim. He was not satisfied with the foundation of the All-India Muslim League, the National Muslim University, Jamait-Ulema or the League of Muslim Divines and the Khilafat League. He was out to establish a World Muslim Federation, unconcerned about the idea that he was making a present of slaves before a body of free, independent non-Indian Muslims. The Ali Brothers were determined to use the authority and influence of the Khilafat League, long after the Khilafat question was dead and the *raison d'etre* for its existence had vanished. They stretched their arms across the mighty Indian peninsula and insisted on pouring out their gushing love for other Muslim people at the cost of disloyalty to their own Motherland. India

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

to them was small; Islam was big and all-absorbing. India was a mere foot-stool to exalt Islam in the order of the sun! They would have done well to learn something from that most interesting personality of American politics, "Czar" Reed, once Speaker of the House of Representatives, who wrote opposing American imperialist adventures: "I already have more country than I can love."

Kemal Pasha ruthlessly "sloughed the Sultanate, the Caliphate and the distinctive Ottoman costume." The Turkish Dictator who so ably managed to give his people a place in the sun answered the advocates who opined that "without the Sultanate and Caliphate, Turkey would be reduced to the place of a small power without prestige," with the effective reply "that with a population of only thirteen or fourteen millions, Turkey had no power to exercise the Caliphate power over the Muslim peoples of the world, many of whom were living under foreign governments." But what Kemal Pasha discarded as old and tattered, was good enough for the Ali Brothers, who would attempt tasks deemed unworthy by the greatest living warrior-statesman of Modern Islam. Further, Kemal Pasha exhorted other Islamic peoples to stand on their own legs and stop looking up to Turkey for guidance. "It is time that Turkey looks to herself, ignores Indians and Arabs, and rids herself of the leadership of Islam. Turkey has enough to do to look after herself. The Caliphate has sucked us white for centuries." Mahomed Ali would have branded Kemal a "Kaffir," worthy of ostracism; but his shafts would not touch him.

The brothers burned with a kind of fanatically exclusive love for Islam. They would wage a crusade against the legions of "Kaffirs" spread all over the globe. Did not Nelson swear "that he would like to hang every Frenchman who came near him, Royalist and Republican alike"? Hate takes root as a tradition and lasts. The

## MAULANA MAHOMED ALI

Ali Brothers strove to sin in the company of the great ones! They cared not if they had to ride rough-shod over the religious rights of other peoples. Mahomed Ali would not even forgive Mahatma Gandhi for not being a Muslim. He would arrogate that every human being on the surface of the globe ought to be a follower of the Prophet. At one time he suggested that the entire mass of Untouchables be converted to Islam. If anyone dared broach the subject of Islam, the Maulana would be ruthless and merciless in his condemnation. It was his exclusive province, he the only Defender and Protector of the Faith!

The word of God seemed to resound perpetually in the Maulana's ears. He would quote the Koran wherever he went and roar out from every platform, "I have a culture, a polity, an outlook on life, a complete synthesis which is Islam." It was amazing how this man who had imbibed the culture of Oxford and trained in liberal and progressive ideas should have become such a fanatic. His soul burned with an exclusive love for Islam. The tornado of his fanatic religious fury was not calmed down till the end of his life. He opposed the Sarda Act tooth and nail, on the ground that it interfered with the teaching of the Prophet, though the Act was a long over-due measure of social reform. He breathed fire and vengeance on the "perpetrators of wrong" and openly defied the Act by blessing the marriage of a legally under-aged couple in the midst of a crowded congregation of Muslims, whose fanaticism he roused to the highest pitch. Before this audience, Mahomed Ali angrily declared that "there was another law enacted by God himself as promulgated to them by their Prophet more than 1,300 years ago and that they were followers of a more natural law of God by breaking the law passed by the Indian Legislature, *consisting of mere human beings.*" The Maulana clean forgot in his fury that the justice of the Sarda enactment.

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

lay in its essential element of *humanity*, without reference to the Divinity which he quoted in his holy fervour !

As a former President of the Indian National Congress he was once the idol of the Indian masses during the halcyon days of Non-Co-operation, but he wiped off his past and rolled in the communal mire. The populace remembered how he once gripped their imagination by his famous phrase after his release that the country's only business when his *guru* was imprisoned was to "search the key to Yeravda." When the brothers were released they were accorded a triumphant reception at the Amritsar Congress. Again when the Simon Commission was appointed he shouted out "*Darwaza bandkaro*" (shut the door!) and thus sprang the cry of boycott. Ever emotional, every sessions of the Congress found him weeping like a child ! When Gandhi broke his first fast at Delhi, Mahomed Ali presented him with a cow as a symbol of peace. Words were mere tools to him when his ideas moved with lightning speed, as testified by the occasion when some one appealed to him as he occupied the Congress Presidential Chair about some constitutional procedure, he coolly decreed that "Constitutions like women are meant to be violated."

Mahomed Ali wrecked his nationalism on the rock of his fanaticism. Eternally haunted by the idea that Muslims were the masters of India for centuries—from the eighth to the middle of the nineteenth—he foolishly cried out for Muslim hegemony in this enlightened twentieth century. Hence, the war for seats and percentages and safeguards to ensure Muslim domination to reduce Hindu majorities to impotent minorities ! Mahomed Ali tore the Nehru Report to pieces and if what was reported is true that he felt slighted by Pandit Motilal Nehru keeping him out of the Congress Working Committee, then the Maulana conveniently exploited personal grievances

and paraded them as wrongs to his people ! When Hindus failed to pander to the whims of the Ali Brothers, they turned aggressively communalist, decrying patriots as "communalists and enemies of freedom." They did not stop to consider that Gandhi's invaluable aid to the Khilafat question gave a fillip to reaction and we should never have come to such a pass, had we washed our hands clean off this Khilafat business and kept it out as a dubious ally of our national politics.

Yet, unto the last there remained a saving grace of patriotism in the Maulana; though it must have been almost choked with his religious fanaticism. Sinking under the pain of sure death, he undertook the voyage to England as a Delegate to the First Session of the Round Table Conference. Accompanied by his wife, who knew not a word of English and who discarded her veil for the first time, he declared that a man with his ailments "would not have travelled seven miles; yet, I have come seven thousand miles away from my Motherland, because where Islam and India are concerned, I am positively mad." He spoke in accents of dignity and self-respect when he affirmed his resolve that he would "never go back to a slave country but would prefer to die in a foreign land as long as his Motherland was fettered and shackled." He solemnly added in a prophetic vein, "If you do not give us freedom, you will have to give me a grave here." He was given the grave he yearned for, though his remains as a Knight of Islam were rewarded with a resting place in the Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem. He confronted the British nation with the prospect of an India developing "the will to die before the will to kill." Was he expressing his once-loved Master's cherished doctrine of non-violence in an inverted form ? "In India we have not the power to kill but the moment we develop the will to die, numbers will tell. 320,000,000 cannot be killed." Mahomed Ali presented British Imperialism with the most



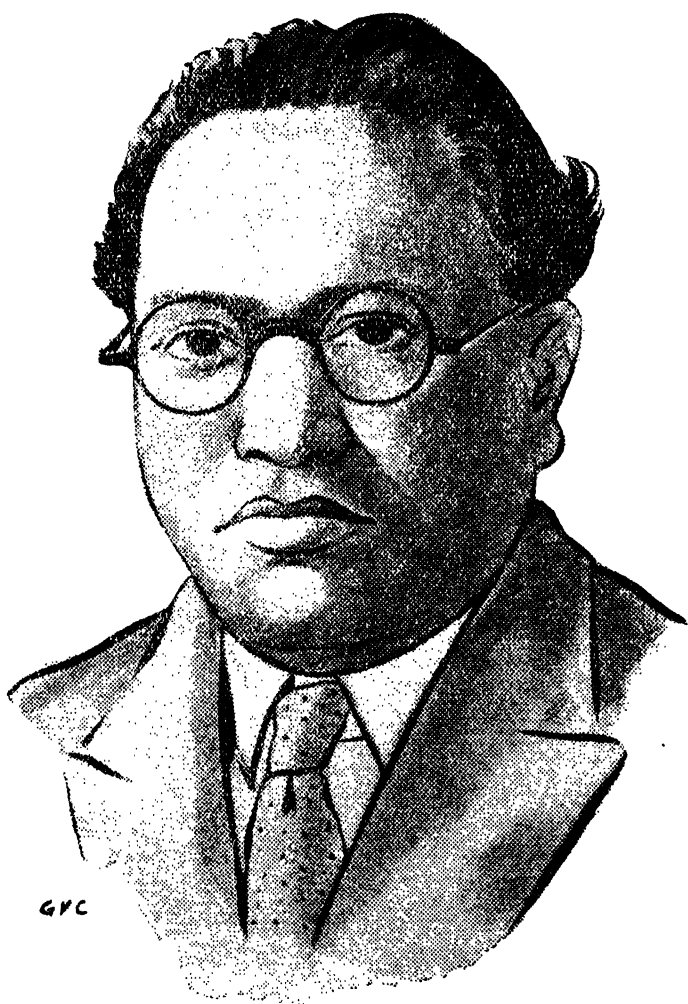
## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

frightful prospect. How could it have the "morale" to face such a calamity! That would mean the end of the Empire! His love for Islam and India was expressed by him in a nut-shell in that historic speech at London:

"Where God commands I am a Mussalman first, a Mussalman second and a Mussalman last and nothing but a Mussalman. My first duty is to my Maker not to His Majesty. But where India is concerned, where India's freedom is concerned, where India's welfare is concerned, I am an Indian first, an Indian second and an Indian last and nothing but an Indian through and through. I belong to two circles of equal size which are not concentric."

Mahomed Ali had no heart in the business when his life-long comrades were behind prison-bars. He frankly acknowledged the strength of nationalism when he said that "the trial of strength between the Congress and Government had lasted enough with the best display of forces on either side." He found that the nationalist movement had reached phenomenal heights and felt depressed that he was eating his heart out in solitary grandeur in the wilderness outside. He knew that his end had come and longed to make peace with Nationalist India.

Maulana Mahomed Ali's death removed from the stage one of the most arresting personalities of Indian politics, who having once found his vocation irretrievably lost it. To him belongs the credit of having been the first Indian Muslim who taught his people that they had other things to bother about than mere religion, the first and last breath of their nostrils. A force to be reckoned with, he prodigally scattered his genius. His driving power and the total war spirit with which he heightened the interest of our public life, are gone! He seemed to cover up his defection in one final effort towards the end when he delivered that unforgettable speech in the heart of London. He was the first General of his race since the days of the Mutiny to summon his forces in battle-array, but he failed to lead them on to victory or death!



**DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR**



## DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR

**D**ID you engineer the demonstration against the Doctor in the morning classes," fired Principal Dalvi at the present writer.

"I know nothing about the noise this morning; even if I had done anything I wouldn't disown it. You can heap the consequences on my head."

The writer was sent for and a charge was about to be framed against him. Yusuf Meherally was also sent for to know whether he had a hand in it.

Those were the days when there were morning and evening classes in the Government Law College of Bombay and we "pocketed" the degrees with just one hour's daily attendance. Legal education was not so much systematised then as it is now.

That was in 1928 when the star of the trenchant Depressed Classes Leader had not started to run on the horizon. His law students got up in a body and walked out one morning after the learned Doctor-professor went into the class for his morning lecture. One of them boldly got up and read a long denunciation of his association with the Simon Commission. All Bombay and in fact the whole country had boycotted it. Mahomed Ali Jinnah had not then even dreamt of the two-nation theory; his ambition was to be the leader of the hosts of Indian nationalism. He had whipped up the city's enthusiasm in boycotting the Simon Commission. The boycott cry from Bombay rent the skies throughout the length and breadth of Hindustan. The Bombay students flocked in the vanguard.

The news of the students' demonstration flashed across the wires of the world's press. "Oh! you learned Doctor,

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

you who are our guide and philosopher, you who lecture to us in so learned a manner should have fallen so low as to associate yourself with the Simon Commission spurned by the Nation."

From then onwards commenced one of the most turbulent careers in Indian politics. Doctor Ambedkar threw his thunderbolts into every camp. Congress and Congressmen were anathema to him. Gandhi was its arch-villain and the evil genius of a *bania* ! Gandhi was both irresponsible and even insane ! The Doctor's hot politics were too much for the quietness of the Law College. Somebody hinted that if the learned Doctor continued to be on the staff of the College, the students would be poisoned with his doctrines and the walls of the College would crash ! Sir John Beaumont, the most popular Chief Justice of Bombay started with a rank prejudice against him. The Doctor's brilliant work as an Advocate on the Criminal Appellate Side of the Bombay High Court won him the esteem of the Chief Justice who always loved to sit on that Bench. The Chief who had kept him off the post of Principal was forced to give it to him. The Doctor completely conquered him. A warm attachment grew between the two. By the time he went to the Viceroy's Council, our distinguished Counsel established himself as a leader of the Criminal Appellate Bar.

Dr. Ambedkar is hailed as the messiah of his people. None had grown to such stature amongst them before. He was the first to storm the citadel of the Viceroy's Executive Council. To the Depressed Classes it was an event more significant than for the Congressman to enter the same body with the sanction of his organisation. The Harijans were masses of humanity, suspect and down-trodden. The caste Hindus spurned them for centuries. All the laws that men and gods devised were used to exploit them unto perpetual helotry.

"Are your people all butlers?" asked Lord Simon (then Sir John Simon) of the Doctor. "They were once the noble tillers and lords of the soil," retorted the Doctor, "until they were ostracised by the blue-blooded Brahmins." They were no butlers. It would have been easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a Mahar to enter the Brahmin's kitchen!

Doctor Ambedkar put his people on the legislative map of India. They got their seats on the provincial and central legislatures. The Mahatma rebelled against the unjust arrangement of Communal Award that split the Hindus into separate camps. The Depressed classes simply could not look into the face of the caste Hindus. They had been assigned a permanent position of bondage. The Doctor himself had tried his hand at everything. He had been a hamal, a gardener and even attempted to be a mill-hand. Not possessing sufficient train fare from Satara to Bombay, he was prevented from becoming a mill-hand. Poverty deterred him not from the heights which he scaled with homeric dexterity, skill and courage. The late Gaekwar of Baroda gave him a scholarship for studies in Europe and America and he bagged two Doctorates, one of London and another of Cornell! Reading has always been his passion and that passion is hugely displayed in his house at Dadar, Bombay, where is housed one of the finest private libraries in the land. Even a second hand bookseller successfully disposes of his wares to him. He will not hawk in vain around the Doctor's residence!

Returning from abroad, the Doctor went to Baroda, the State of his benefactor. But the treatment of the caste Hindus chilled him and drove him away. If plain charitable treatment had been meted to him, he would have lived and retired an official of that State and politics would have been robbed of one of its most colourful personalities. He settled down in Bombay; went into a chawl-

## **MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN**

room and slept on the bare floor, though he was a Barrister-at-Law of the Gray's Inn. He had veritably sprung out of the bowels of the earth and to the earth he seemed to remain loyal. His uncommon energy, superb intelligence, passion for work and courage supplied the real leader to his community. The arrival of the Simon Commission ignited the spark in his public career.

He just became bold and literally adopted Spencer's maxim: "Be bolde, be bolde, and evermore be bolde!" He learnt that by daring and reckless courage, great fears and weaknesses are removed. He was most powerfully tempted and pampered with undue attentions. Mahatma Gandhi had also an unparalleled record of service on behalf of the Depressed Classes whom he chose to be respectfully addressed as "Harijans." But the Doctor would brook no rivals. He would tolerate no one else occupying the pedestal. Being the product of abnormal social and economic conditions, in which Indian society had abysmally let itself down, Doctor Ambedkar deliberately cultivated an abnormal individuality.

As a person the Doctor is a most charming man. The trouble has been that people whom he hates have neither taken kindly to him much less have they showered enough attention on him. He was ignored and overlooked. This undoubtedly bred crass egotism in him. "You have no idea of my sufferings and labours," he told the writer. "You would have been wiped off. I started on nothing." There is more romance in some of the chapters of his life than in those of the late Marquis Reading who ascended from the rung of a cabin boy to the Viceroyalty of India. "They hunted me from all the sacred haunts of Brahmins and I could not even get into a shaving saloon," were his bitter recollections. "We never expected you back into this restaurant," were the welcome remarks we addressed him when he was back to tea at the charming

little corner of Marosa's Restaurant (old Comba's) near the Bombay High Court. He went straight there even after he assumed the Membership of the Viceroy's Council. Far away is he from that glee which overwhelmed Ramsay McDonald : "Now that I am the first Labour Premier, every Duchess of West End will want to kiss my hands."

Ambedkar emphatically claimed that he was the be-all-and end-all of the existence of the untouchables. He never recognized the chapter in the life of the Mahatma exclusively devoted to the cause of the untouchables. The Doctor at no time peeped into the Mahatma's Ashram where the touchable and the untouchable lived in peace and harmony and the former smilingly performed all the menial tasks the latter did in the world of caste-ridden Brahmins. To him the name of the Mahatma was saturated with evil. It was calamity for his community to have such a benefactor ! The learned Doctor set his face to obliterate the collective record of all caste Hindu social reformers and thus eclipse them all, especially Gandhi. Hence, the delightful spectacle "of a pigmy rummaging the armoury of a giant." In this attempt he reminded us of the Chinese Emperor, who wanted to be known as the "First Emperor of China," who having built a great wall against the Huns in the third century before Christ, took into his head to burn all books to impress posterity that ageless China never existed before ! The Chinese Emperor ordained that all Chinese histories before him should be burned except the memories of his own rule !

The Doctor wanted to spring a thunderbolt. He returned from the Indian Round Table Conference evidently enlightened with superior instructions as to how to force the pace of the untouchable's progress. In his vendetta against Mahatma Gandhi during the Conference in London in 1931 the Doctor drew in the cheers of all the forces arrayed against Indian nationalism in that heart of the Empire.



## **MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN**

**"Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer  
And without sneering taught the rest to sneer."**

The Doctor's ambitions spurred on in India by the reactionary members of the Indian Civil Service and the adulations of the British Tories abroad taught him to love himself first instead of loving himself last. And by that sin feel the Angels! Ambedkar's conduct goaded the Mahatma to demonstrate his abiding love for the Depressed Classes by embarking upon his historic fast unto death within jail-walls. His hostility to the Mahatma made him "chiefest foe the most famous of all men." During his confinement in Yeravda Jail at Poona in 1932, the Mahatma directed a campaign against untouchability and made the issue the storm centre of world controversy. By this fast, Gandhi became the topic of the world's talk. The fame that went forth from the Yeravda Jail soared to heights never reached before. Ambedkar's request to Ramsay MacDonald to settle the Communal ratios in the legislatures, led to this discomfiture in the life of the turbulent politician. The Doctor cried hoarse at the gates of the Yeravda Jail :

**"I trust that I will not be driven to the necessity of making a choice between Gandhi's life and the rights of my people. I can never consent to deliver my people bound hand and foot to the Hindus for generations. I don't care even if a hundred Mahatmas are sacrificed. Mahatmas are not immortal creatures. You are all free to hang me from the nearest lamp-post."**

However, the Mahatma was all kindness and benevolence to the Doctor at the end of his fast. He complimented him in a manner only a Mahatma could do, on the noble manner in which he had conducted himself. The Mahatma declared to the Doctor : "I am proud of you. I have always listened to your speeches breathlessly." When the two thus effected a reconciliation at Yeravda, they praised each other recalling the remarks of the erring

wife in one of Tolstoy's stories : " We compete in generosity; what an example of family happiness !"

With lightning instinct, his eye firmly fixed on the essentials, the Doctor advised his adherents to concentrate on the improvement of their social status and economic conditions. He was not content with the mere right of Temple-entry for them. The Doctor demanded the abolition of caste; as if that was possible of achievement through a magic wand. The great Doctor was not moved by the moral in the proverb : " Much wants more and loses all." Once the arrangement of the Poona Pact was arrived at, he sensibly warned his adherents not to be caught in the trap of the temple-entry. Bread was more important to them than the worship of the gods ! Let the gods take care of themselves, ran his exhortation; the need of our stomachs is pressing.

However, the next time, the learned Doctor " shocked " the Hindu community, was when he threatened to leave the fold of Hinduism, lock, stock, and barrel, with all his followers. He fumed in his *What Path Salvation ?*

" I have taken my decision. It is certain that I am going to change my religion. My religious conversion is not inspired by any material motive. There is hardly anything that I cannot achieve even while remaining an untouchable. There is no sentiment other than that of spiritual feeling underlying my religious conversion. My intellect does not accept Hinduism. My self-respect cannot assimilate Hinduism."

The Doctor summoned two Mahar Conferences and advised religious conversion as the only panacea. Frantic and frankly indecent overtures were made by all the communities to win his religious allegiance. But, the clever Doctor kept everyone on their tenterhooks; he promised none, though he kept all guessing and hoping. Buddhists went in a deputation to him; the Sikhs were ready to lay all their treasures at his feet, and Christian Missiona-

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

ries were no less enthusiastic in the race to rope in the Doctor into their fold. A few Mahars were converted to Sikhism and the Gurudwar Sikh Committee ventured into establishing a college in Bombay. But the Doctor's bluff was finally called off and the threat ended in a dud; the Hindus lost a negligible number of souls by this threat.

Ambedkar made love to Quaide-I-Azam Jinnah Saheb; but the associates soon fell out. There was nothing in common between the two except their hatred of the Mahatma. These two ungovernable tempers of Indian politics could not be held for long on the same footstool. The Doctor said that the Muslim League used the Depressed Classes as long as it suited them; then they threw them overboard by trumpeting their two-nation theory. There was a rank slur on the Doctor and his followers when they were branded by the League Feuhrer that they were not of the same blood, flesh and bone! The Doctor warned his people to take care of themselves and that if necessary they would even have to fight the Muslim League. Before this the Doctor published his vigorous brochure on *Pakistan*; Jinnah did not know whether to trade him as a friend or foe!

When the Viceroy's Executive Council was first expanded in 1941, Doctor Ambedkar indignantly charged the British Government with breach of faith with the Depressed Classes for having excluded them from representation. Of course, he was terribly put out that he was left out. Yet he thundered that he "personally never depended on the support of the British; much less did he have it at any time." He continued: "I can do without it for the future. No representation for sixty million Depressed Classes is a monstrosity." The Doctor was rewarded within a space of a year with a seat when more space was made available on the Viceroy's Council. He damned the Congress all along; but that very Congress created the situation for the expansion of the Viceroy's Council. On the

eve of his departure to take office in New Delhi, he told the present writer that he would stand no damned nonsense. "I will urge that the British Government either make immediate terms with the Congress and arrive at a settlement or lock them all up till the war was over. I won't have half-measures." He was true to his word. The story ran true that he was the foremost amongst the Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council who strongly urged the immediate arrest of all the Congress leaders the moment the All-India Congress Committee passed their historic resolution in Bombay for launching the movement; though the door was kept open for conciliation in the form of the intervening period by which Mahatma Gandhi was to communicate with the Viceroy and it was to be made a starting point of negotiations.

He made a slashing attack on the Congress for turning down the proposals brought by Sir Stafford Cripps. Yet it was the same Doctor who on his birthday condemned Sir Stafford as the worst enemy of the country. Benjamin Guy Horniman, who frequently headlined the Doctor's activities in his paper *Bombay Sentinel* quietly gave the shattering report in his brilliant column 'Twilight Twitters': "The Doctor dubbed Sir Stafford the worst enemy of the country on his birthday; but a job makes all the difference when Sir Stafford is hailed as the saviour."

Having been set firmly in the Viceroy's Council, he would not welcome any idea of a National Cabinet. "We are the National Cabinet; why do you want another? They would not work miracles and do nothing better than ourselves. We are running the administration truly well," with these words he laid the flattering unction unto his soul and unconsciously expressed his dread of a Congress-League Cabinet embodying the best National interests. Why should he not occupy the *gadi* as long as the War lasted? He insulted the Legislative Assembly in his first

speech on the floor of the House. He called them an old, diseased and good-for-nothing Chamber, forgetting that the expanded Viceregal Council was created in the teeth of National opposition and commanded no approval of the country.

Managing the Labour Portfolio of the Viceroy's Cabinet with ex-Comrade, R. S. Nimbkar as the Chief Labour Welfare Adviser to the Government of India, Dr. Ambedkar waxed eloquent about his achievements on behalf of Labour claiming to have been their foremost exponent. He declared that Labour got a better deal under his regime and things were much better than before. But noble, dignified and statesmanlike N. M. Joshi, the veteran Labour leader pricked the bubble and exposed the Doctor's claims. In a survey of the Doctor's Labour achievements from the Viceregal Council, Joshi proved that the condition of Labour had worsened and more fetters forged around them. Other critics reminded the Doctor that he had made an excellent job by marrying his Communalism with Marxism. Gone were the days when Ambedkar flirted with Communists and ventured to help them in their General Strike in Bombay !

A great scholar, his penetrating intellect set on that massive figure of his, can carry him through anywhere at all times and at all places. He may be accused of intellectual vanity; but his simplicity of living is most winning. He bitterly mourns the loss of his wife, who was a pious and religious-minded Hindu woman. Alone he has striven for the leadership of his community and managed to win the blind homage of his followers. He will go back and feast in the slums of the Bombay Development Chawls straight from the tables of Viceregal Lodge. To whatever heights fame may elevate him, he will hark back to his old haunts and old familiar places.



CHARLES F. ANDREWS



## CHARLES F. ANDREWS

**T**HE scene was laid two and twenty years ago on the top of the Ediyah Hill at Mangalore in the surroundings of the magnificent building of St. Aloysius College where the Italian and Mangalorean Jesuits have worked in excellent harmony nearly three quarters of a century for the education of youth. The ground was strewn with sharp stones and no unshod soft feet could tread the hill-side, beautifully overlooking the sea. The present writer, a mere school-boy, saw a sun-burnt Englishman, bare-headed, bearded and dressed in a dhoti slowly walking up the hill. No one could miss his austere figure; for he walked bare-footed ! To witness a member of the ruling race, walking bare-footed with pain but with dignity was a sight for Indians and Englishmen to witness. It was an act of thorough identification with the aims and objects of the people of the land. No white man walked thus in this country displaying such emblems of renunciation. It was clear that this bare-footed white man walked with difficulty and going thus he seemed to atone the wrongs his countrymen had ruthlessly inflicted with their booted feet on the back of the Indian nation. The people around whispered that it was Charlie Andrews ! A young student could then have clasped his hands with those of Andrews and exclaimed, : "India is grateful to you for what you have done for her." "No, no, my dear boy," Andrews would have swiftly and naturally replied, "it is just the other way ! It is I who am grateful to India, for what she has done for me." An unforgettable picture this, in the gallery of any man's heart !

\* \* \* \* \*

Amrit Kaur, Mahatma Gandhi's Indian Christian woman follower and secretary has reminded us, "On more



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

than one occasion he has returned to our house bereft of his coat and drenched with rain because he felt that some poor hillman carrying a heavy load on his back needed the garment more than he did." Pyarelal has narrated the other incident when as Gandhiji's cashier he handed a ten-rupee note to Andrews to pay off the tongawalla. Andrews reported the loss of the note. Gandhiji took his cashier to task and said, "Did you not know that Andrews would give it away to the first beggar he met if he did not lose it? You might as well have entrusted a baby with cash."

\* \* \* \* \*

Turn to that moving episode of the post-Rowlatt Act and Martial Law days in the Punjab. Gandhiji's Autobiography refers to Andrews' "heart-rending description of the state of things there . . . and the impression that Martial Law atrocities were in fact worse than the press report showed. He pressed me urgently to come and join him." In the course of his travels, Andrews heard of a retired Military Officer who had suffered much during the Martial Law regime on account of his refusal to tender tutored evidence. Stripes were the reward of his refusal! He was located with difficulty and Andrews implored him to narrate the story of the ill-treatment meted out to him. He was bluntly asked to mind his own business as he said he had enough of Englishmen! Immediately, Andrews embraced him, and the brave Martial Law victim was overwhelmed with this mark of affection shown by a member of the ruling race. "Brother," begged Andrews, "do please tell me the truth." Further resistance was impossible for this officer as his suspicions had been completely conquered by Andrews' touching behaviour. He bared his back and exposed the distressing and ghastly sight of the lash marks. Andrews almost collapsed, but full of tenderness and charity, with tears rolling down his eyes, he fell prostrate at the feet of this Indian Officer

and with folded hands cried out, "Brother, I beg your forgiveness on behalf of my people." Pity touched pity and meekness called forth kindness. "Sahib," magnanimously replied the wounded officer, "I can forgive the whole of the English race as long as there is one Englishman like you in India." Andrews was the faithful messenger of Christ who strove to heal the wounds inflicted by his countrymen on the hapless millions of India. The case of the Punjab Officer was one in a thousand and indeed men like Anreus were one in a thousand amongst the ruling English. India's back had borne the indelible marks of suffering for a century and a half and alas! there were too few Samaritans like Andrews to minister to the distressing needs of her people.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let us turn to the epilogue of Andrews' life, the preface of an historic chapter. Late on that Sunday evening of August 8, 1942, Mahatma Gandhi ascended the rostrum of the All-India Congress Committee at Gowalia Tank Maidan, Bombay, to make his celebrated speech approving of the "Quit India" resolution. The introductory remarks of that telling speech still resound in our ears. Right at the beginning, the Mahatma referred to Andrews to indicate his innate love for the Englishman.

"The body of Andrews lies solemnly between the two countries to remind us of our intimate relations. Who can forget the imperishable debt of gratitude both Englishmen and Indians owe to him? There was nothing he kept secret from me and I had imparted every bit of confidence to him. My heart harks back to the sound of that love and kindness which existed between him and me when our lives were almost blended into one on the altar of service of the Motherland and of humanity. The soul of Andrews beckons England and India alike to unite. Another such opportunity may never arise!"

For these words, the present writer relies on his memory. Grave and noble words these, and graver still the events that followed the next day . . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

Earlier, Tagore hailed him as a real Englishman, a real Christian and a true man to whom the whole of India remained indebted for innumerable acts of love and devotion.

“But personally speaking, I am especially beholden to him because he helped me to retain in my old age that feeling of respect for the English race with which in the past I was inspired by their literature and which I was about to lose completely. I count such Englishmen as Andrews not only as my personal and intimate friends but as friends of the whole human race . . . . One day, as if from nowhere, from one who was still then a complete stranger to me, there was poured upon me this generous gift of friendship . . . . This has been the highest blessing of my life . . . . It is my belief that such Englishmen will save British honour from shipwreck.”

The late Mahadev Desai thus epitomised Andrews' services: “I do not know an Englishman who loved India more and who served India better.” Gandhi paid him the just tribute that “because he was a good son of England he also became a son of India.” One of the Mahatma's last public activities before his incarceration in August 1942 was his fortnight's exclusive activity in Bombay in collecting five lakhs of rupees in donations for Andrews' Memorial Fund sponsored by Tagore's Shantiniketan. No wonder that the All-India Leaders' Appeal to perpetuate Andrews' memory reminded the public that the initials of Andrews' name were once rightly interpreted as “*Christ's Faithful Apostle*.”

“Alas! for the rarity of Christian charity,” sighed out Thomas Hood in his immortal poem “The Bridge of Sighs.” Christianity, perverted and torn from its text in its practice both in the East and the West “crucified Christ all over again!” The East and the West can never be spiritual compatriots without the latter shedding off its rank unchristian *malaise*. It is too deep to fall off overnight. The genuine admirers of Christ in the East demand

more solid spiritual food than hitherto exported by professed admirers of Christ from the West. The West must put its house in order before throwing its spiritual doors wide open to the East. Andrews felt that the Christian peoples and powers of the West would feel strong enough to take the Easterners in their spiritual confidence only after they unlearned their unchristian methods in their dealings with the rest of the world. The sword to conquer and the Bible to complete the process of conquest seem to have been the watch-words of Imperialists. These harbingers of "Western Civilisation into the East" were only concerned with that kind of supremacy "measured in millions of square miles and billions of foreign trade." The heart of Andrews was distressed with this tragedy enacted by his fellow-men from the West in the numerous Eastern spheres of influence and domination. He asked within himself and then openly queried as to when this unchristian, unholy and inhuman contest for power, pelf and prestige would cease. The British and other Western Imperialists hypocritically aimed at the salvation of our souls after having wrought the complete destruction of our bodies and spirits by their ruthless methods of human destruction. Andrews strove to end this self-imposed role of the Westerner to teach and instruct the Easterner. Henry Ford in his *Autobiography* also dealt with the same point.

"You can never develop Mexico unless you develop the Mexican and how much of the development of Mexico took account of the development of the Mexican people . . . . When rich natural resources are exploited for the increase of the private fortunes for foreign capitalists, that is not development, it is ravishment."

The paramount mission of Charlie Andrews was to teach the West the art of giving without arrogance and to persuade the East to receive without loss of dignity. He worked valiantly for the destruction of racial barriers and practised the rules of his master's philosophy. He drew

inspiration from Radhakrishnan's *Philosophy of Tagore* that "when a man does not realise his kinship with the world, he lives in a prison-house whose walls are alien to him." Only men like Andrews mitigated the horrors of racial pride. By their disinterested work they attempted almost impossible jobs. In a world of supreme selfishness, men like him carried aloft the torch of peace and harmony and universal brotherhood.

Andrews roamed the world and realised the essential unity of mankind. He went into the remote fastnesses of Southern America, viewed the stupendous human creations in North America, lived in the interior and fraternised with every type of African race, sympathised with indentured Indian labour in the smiling fields of Fiji, New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand and claimed to have embraced every continent in his benevolent itinerary except the Antarctic. He declared that Asia was the mother of every race and it held the pride of place amongst the nations and peoples of the world. Words of wisdom and religious messages went forth from Asia only into all the corners of the world. It was in Asia that Andrews found out the abiding spot of his missionary zeal—India. He hailed India as the centre and hub of Asia. When he turned to Africa, he found that the soul of Africa was in remarkable tune with the rhythm of the universe and that it was not dulled or dimmed by sophisticated usage. His travels and his survey drew him to the inevitable conclusion that the doctrine of the supremacy of the White Race embodied every element of hostility and selfishness, which was bound to come in ultimate clash with the coloured peoples of the world. The coloured races would ultimately resist such exclusive domination imposed by the white races and the world perforce would be drawn into a terrific conflict. Andrews warned the West against such a catastrophe and nobly attempted to remain potentially a good European, making plain and simple duty the guiding star of his life.

## CHARLES F. ANDREWS

Life in the East had taught Andrews to appreciate the quietness and calmness of life, with a distinct distaste for hurry and speed—the characteristics of western development. He summed up his quarter of a century of intimate Indian experiences with the remarks that :

“Western life has become intolerable because of its speed and haste and vanity, for surely man was not intended by God merely to race through day after day of his existence without any further end in view than to make money and spend it.”

Andrews' personality was an excellent contradiction to Defoe's slander “that the Englishman was the mud of all races.” He “outraged” everyone of the three cardinal rules with which the Englishman “adorned” himself : “he can suffer no partner in his love, no stranger to be his equal, nor to be dared by any.” The club has become the Englishman's castle and he will not brook the “nigger's” presence therein. It is the safest domain of his exclusiveness and the guarantee of his racial arrogance. These black sinks of racial supremacy will have to be blown to pieces if racial equality has to be a reality instead of an empty platitude flowing out of the copious Viceregal or gubernatorial toasts in this country. The late Shapurji Saklatwalla once told the House of Commons of his bitter experience when plague was raging Bombay. He had to be escorted through the lavatory just to speak to a British Officer on an urgent anti-plague measure ! The ex-Secretary of State for India, the late Edwin Samuel Montague wrote in his *Indian Diary* that

“the fact the civil servants are willing to work with the Indians but not to play with them the fact that the boxwallah will have nothing to do with them really brought the present political situation upon us.”

Emerson went further in his biting characterisation of the typical Englishman :

“Everyone of the islanders is an island himself, safe, tranquil, incommunicable. In company of strangers, you

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN\*

would think him deaf. They have all been trained in one severe school of manners and never put off the harness . . . . every whim of exaggerated egotism is put into stone and iron, into silver and gold, with costly deliberation and detail."

Earlier in his career Andrews had been strongly drawn by the vast field of service in India. As a brilliant graduate at Cambridge his original ambition was to go into the wilds of Central Africa. This idea fascinated him for a long time, until the call of India came forth. He joined the Cambridge Mission working in India and became a Professor of English in a Delhi College. Before this he went into the slums of England, amongst the dock-workers and even amongst thieves. He first served his apprenticeship in these neglected, tainted spots of humanity. After teaching for a few years at Delhi, he was drawn into the vortex of the Indian Nationalist Movement; there was no going back from it. He viewed the Indian field of "destruction of alien influence" with sympathy and understanding and voluntarily undertook constructive work so that he could be useful to Indians, both at home and abroad, wherever they were to be found on the face of the globe. Gandhi and Tagore now together shaped and influenced his life. His book on *Mahatma Gandhi at Work* is the passive resisters' manual of revolt. Through his excellent literary works, Andrews turned out to be the finest exponent in the West of Gandhi's thoughts and actions.

Gandhiji has already acknowledged his debt of gratitude to Charlie Andrews. The Mahatma frankly cherished some of his conversations with his beloved Charlie as "amongst the sweetest and the most vivid." Many times he prevented the Mahatma from falling into unconscious errors. When the late Lord Chelmsford, the ex-Viceroy of India invited Mahatma Gandhi to a War Conference, Andrews "raised the question of the morality of partici-

pation" in such a Conference, when Britain had or was making secret treaties with other European powers. To Gandhi, Andrews' one word of caution was a pearl of wisdom. In the Punjab Martial Law days and after, Andrews supplied the Mahatma with a wealth of graphic description of the distress which was "even worse than the press reports." When the visit of the late Duke of Connaught was announced, Andrews showed no hesitation and boldly wrote about the "Use and Abuse" of such visits in the columns of Mahatma's *Young India*. He denounced that royal visits were unscrupulously used by Government for political purposes . . . .

"The idea is, first of all, sedulously propagated that the royal visit has nothing to do with politics; that the royal family are above politics—that they are strictly neutral in their political attitude. Thereafter, the news is placarded on all sides that a great political success has been obtained . . . . the danger always lurks at the back that some distinctly political object may be aimed at behind the scenes; that evil systems which have power and authority for oppression and subjection of the weak . . . . let us not weakly surrender ourselves or put trust in governments . . . . The only course which is dignified and self-respecting during the coming royal visit of the Duke of Connaught is to refrain altogether from offering addresses of welcome."

Stern warning this by a Christian Missionary, who set a model of conduct for the tribe of Indian loyalists. Andrews abandoned his career in the Ministry of the Church of England and remained till the end as a faithful and loyal servant of England, serving her true and real interests.

When Lancashire was hit by Gandhi's boycott and khaddar programmes, Andrews faithfully interpreted the Mahatma's mind to the people there. He widely endeavoured to correctly acquaint the two sections with each other's positions. He bluntly told Britain that:

"India cannot live for Lancashire or for any other country; before she is able to live for herself; and she



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

can live for herself only if she produces everything for her own requirements, within her own borders . . . England has sinned against India by forcing Free Trade upon her. It may have been food for England; but poison for this country."

Andrews spent a deal of time in persuading the Lancashire operatives and employers that the Mahatma's movement for economic self-sufficiency was not meant to inflict wounds on anyone but to morally and physically rehabilitate India. He pleaded in vain for economic fellowship.

He rendered yeoman service during some of the most critical periods of the Mahatma's life. When an agreement was about to be drawn up in South Africa between General Smuts and Gandhiji, there arrived the news of the serious illness of Kasturba. Gandhiji refused to go to the bedside of his ailing wife until the Agreement was signed. Andrews rushed up to Smuts and expedited the signatures, after which the Mahatma was able to go to his wife. During the stages of the Round Table Conference and thereafter when the Communal Award was about to be announced by the late Ramsay MacDonald's Government, there was not one single statesman of importance in London whom Andrews had not visited with his pressing appeals for mediation and conciliation. Later when Gandhiji went on his fast inside the Yeravda Jail which ended in the Yeravda Pact, Andrews gave no rest to Sir Reginald Maxwell, the Home Member of the Government of India, so that the Mahatma's life might not be finally jeopardised. These were the unforgettable missions of mercy and charity embarked upon by Andrews regardless of the strain on himself. To him intense service for every worthy and deserving cause meant unadulterated joy.

Such was the man who made Shantiniketan, in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, his permanent home. In that International Settlement of Culture and Education, he found peace and harmony as nowhere else on the face of

## CHARLES F. ANDREWS

the earth. With Tagore, he laboured to make it a real home for all peoples and all nations of the world. India called him out in his early youth and he finally reposed in that cherished abode. In every conflict there are two great parties in the end and Andrews decided to throw in his lot with that side which had been grossly wronged and to which rank injustice had been meted out. A grateful people affectionately showered on him the title of "Deenabandhu"; for he was indeed a superman of his race who nobly served another race unto his dying day !





**MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD**



## MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

"YOUR president is one of the greatest orators of the world" exclaimed smiling, chubby Bill Fisher of *Life* and *Time*, full of admiration, when the first round of the historic sessions of the All-India Congress Committee was over on Friday evening, 7th August, 1942 in Bombay. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as the chairman had just concluded his stirring oration. The representatives of the entire world press were there and they clustered around three or four small tables for tea. The present writer arrogantly constituted himself as a *chota* host in that corner and managed to exclude both the Indian and the British journalists, the former on the ground that they could successfully wend their way into a nearby restaurant which their foreign colleagues were unable to do and the latter for the simple reason that as members of the ruling race they were fit to take care of themselves in their big Empire of India!

Young Fisher had roved around the world to Tokyo, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Chungking, Calcutta and Delhi, and was again on the move across the world. He cabled a five-thousand-worded article of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for American *Fortune*, the third of the dazzling trinity of world magazines founded by gallant Henry Robinson Luce and assisted by his brilliant wife, Clare Boothe, who have both nobly championed the cause of Indian freedom. To Henry Luce and his colleagues, Indian political prisoners owe a debt of gratitude for transporting cheer amidst their gloom. *Time* thrilled us with its shrewd comments and reliable information and *Life* captivated us with its beautiful pictures and feature contributions. The present writer can testify to the extreme popularity of *Time* and *Life* amongst his fellow-prisoners. To indo-

mitable S. K. Patil, the General Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee belongs the honour of broadcasting these attractive magazines; after all Patil himself was a journalist of distinction. Even our Communist comrades inside the jail were the first to lodge their claims with him for reading them. They swallowed the "bourgeoise" contents of these periodicals. Would we have an Indian Luce to start such magazines successfully !

Fisher like others could not understand a word of the Maulana's Urdu; but true oratory transcends barriers of race and language. Its appeal and language are powerful and universal. You may speak in any language; the spirit and triumph of oratory can neither be concealed nor crushed. The radio has killed the line of orators; but the effect of the speeches of Demosthenes and Cicero, Burke, Lincoln and Gambetta, Lloyd George and Hitler, Trotsky and Sastri will ring down the corridors of time. Nothing can wipe off that effect on the mind and ear of man ! The Maulana's oratory faithfully fulfills every canon; it is the standard of the Congress platform and the soul of the Muslim masses. Maulana Shah Atullah Bukhari, the eminent Ahrar leader, the hero of many political battles and victim of bureaucratic repression, is perhaps the only one who can compete with the Maulana; but he lacks the latter's illimitable Persian and Arabic background. One must, however, admit that even the deaf and the ignorant can be charmed by Bukhari's oratory. The two Maulanas are the most outstanding Urdu orators today.

Politics which to many is only inconsistency raised to a career has no attraction for the Maulana. He is not the man who lives from day to day. He may lie rusty and immobile but will not temporise. Intrigues, wranglings and cliques turn him away from the battle-field. He can never stick to the mire of party warfare; just because he is too much of a gentleman, stamped with the culture of ages. He is one who has unequivocally stood for the

## MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

genuine, cent per cent brand of Indian nationalism, with a sturdy mixture of the ideal and practical in him. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is one of the oldest and most tried of the Muslims inside the Congress,—a type of man who would do credit to any national organisation in the world. Thrice called upon to preside over the destinies of the Congress, the first time when he was barely thirty-five with nearly four years internment and jail suffering to his credit, no one can accuse him of having let the Congress down during any crisis. Born in Mecca, a Muslim Divine from his cradle, with a proud, learned ancestor who graced the Court of Akbar the Great, nurtured in the finest Arabic and Persian texts, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is the most graceful combination of all that is best in Islam and Hindustan. Jinnah could not bear with him; the two were not equals. Jinnah called him “the show boy of the Congress, whom Gandhi, Nehru and Vallabhbhai could pull any way they pleased.” But Azad was made of stern, hard, patriotic stuff; time was on his side and his record for suffering was challenging. He will live in the history of Islam as one of the greatest interpreters of the Koran. Jinnah was innocent of all that; his stock-in-trade was the lawyer’s audacity, more audacity and still more audacity! Azad was rotting as a government internee when Jinnah merely started declaiming in public life. Further Azad was writing literature for the benefit of posterity when the League leader was perusing his briefs. Azad’s silence in the face of Jinnah’s unprovoked and unwarranted insult was deadening; it was Jinnah who ultimately reeled under the weight of his own blow.

Abul Kalam is the man who would face political extinction for the sake of a principle. We can have hope for a bright political future as long as we have men of his stamp amongst us. He will not find shelter in a mere formula, which has worn off the edge of a principle. If



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

Azad had followed the way of other opportunists, we would have had a bleak prospect for our politics. We should have had given full rein to our fancy and shouted like Thackeray in one of his Titmarch sketches, "Fancy a dancing party all Mulligans!" But Azad's nationalism is built on a rock and not all the tempestuous weather nor the rush of the floods could wash it away. He is not the mulla-ridden fanatic Muslim; his actions are his credentials. He is a celebrated Muslim divine, untrammelled by superstition or orthodoxy. He asserts with his Prophet that "one hour of meditation on the work of the Creator is better than seventy years of prayer." His unrivalled knowledge of Islam is his armour against the shafts of the enemy. He is also not the man to parade his learning but he loves wisdom, with the love of the Chinamen, who according to Bertrand Russel are "the only people in the world genuinely believing that wisdom is more precious than rubies. That is why the West regards them as uncivilised!" Maulana Azad would literally obey Prophet Mahomed's injunctions, "Go even to the walls of China for the sake of learning . . . the acquisition of knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim, male or female." That is how Azad exhibited unusual brilliance whilst only a boy of fifteen in editing a literary magazine. Every hour of his four years internment during World War I was spent with profit by diving into literature. When the agents of the bureaucracy confiscated many of his precious manuscripts, he considered it the worst form of misfortune that could ever befall a man.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is one of the living celebrities of the modern world of Islam. To him, Urdu is an instrument to elevate the mind of the common man. He fights reaction with his classic pen though it only appeals to the intellectual classes, who do not bear the strain of political agitation. The masses suffer and bear the brunt of the sacrifice. His interpretation of the **Koran**

is unpalatable to the Maulvies, the majority of whom dare not hold any open discussion with him. Some of them wax furious with his claim that his interpretation of the Prophet's words is in accordance with the true, original and correct version. Azad's commentaries on the Koran are lasting contributions to the subject. They constitute not mere literature but are marked for their liberal interpretation and breadth of vision.

Religion and politics are no water-tight compartments to the Maulana. His conduct has been influenced by his assumption of their interdependence. He has not run amuck with these twin-bells around his neck, one making a louder noise than the other. He has invested a saving grace in our public life by making a judicious use of the one without neglecting the call of the other. It must be said to his lasting credit that he has not dragged politics into the mire by any unseemly attachment to religious issues. His cosmopolitan breath is both bracing and elevating, undefiled by communalist poison. His work started with his weekly *Al Hilal* even before Mahomed Ali poured forth his exuberance in *Hamdard* and *Comrade*. The Maulana felt the paralysing and penalising hand of an unforgiving and bourbonian bureaucracy. But his vigorous words penetrated the Muslim mind though he was too great a master of Urdu to be appreciated by the common, average Muslim. His ideas are marked for their clarity and he clings to what he has declared over twenty years ago. His statement to the Court when he was put up for trial during the Non-Co-operation Movement, after he had finished four years internment, makes interesting and edifying reading :

"Islam does not permit under any circumstances that Muslims should live a life of slavery. They should either exist as free people or choose extinction. There is no third alternative in Islam. That is why I reminded the Musalmans twelve years ago through the columns of my

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

paper *Al Hilal* that it was their ancient Islamic heritage to offer sacrifice and even lay down their lives in the cause of liberty . . . . Indian Musalmans have decided finally to join hands with their Hindu, Sikh, Christian and Parsi fellow-country-men and to free their Motherland from slavery."

Time was when the inactivity and sheer indifference of the Maulana verging on idleness prevented him from inflicting a rout on the reactionary elements. He had only to move on and say the word and a lot of rot would not have set in. Propaganda with the Maulana is a lever of prodigious dimensions; but he did not use it in time. Besides his shyness was mistaken for snobbery. Even the late Maulana Shaukat Ali stole a march over him with his frenzied and boisterous passion. What Shaukat Ali's intellect lacked, his enthusiasm compensated for him. Azad did not move and push on when the "Big Brother" was rushing the country up and down, rousing, talking and fighting all along the line. Had Abul Kalam possessed a part of Big Brother's unbounded enthusiasm for causes, reaction would have skulked away from his presence like a whipped and beaten animal. The late Maulana Shaukat Ali ran from place to place and thrust himself on the Muslim masses. He was energy and emotion ungoverned by any consistency. Azad possessed a superb moral base without the requisite physical drive. "Laziness is as unjustifiable as anger," observed Balzac; this dictum of one of the greatest French novelists condemned Abul Kalam and Shaukat Ali together. Possessed of a temperament that lets sleeping dogs lie and hating temporary set offs and patches, Azad thrived and remained isolated in unadulterated nationalism.

However, he bore the brunt of the attacks by the Muslim League Feuhrer and did not skulk in his tent. He challenged Jinnah to a round table and promised to settle the entire communal question within twenty-four hours.

## MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

"My trouble is," he thundered in his concluding speech at the All-India Congress Committee meeting (and the echo must be answering echo now in his present place of internment, wherever that may be); "Mr. Jinnah bangs the door every time I try to open it. Five men from our side whom I will get nominated through the Congress Working Committee with full powers and five men from Mr. Jinnah's side will finish off this business within the twinkling of an eye. But who is to respond and respond with reason?"

Azad's loyalty to the Congress and the Mahatma is an admirable trait of his public career. When the Mahatma was in jail in 1933 and some released Congressmen took up the cry of getting the Civil Disobedience Movement withdrawn, he silenced everyone by his masterly analysis of the situation. With perfect humility he confessed that he was merely "a fourteenth part of the Working Committee" though he was the most important member thereof having uninterruptedly sat on it for nearly quarter of a century. Then he applied his devastating constitutional test :

"I am not competent to pass any opinion as I am only a fourteenth part of the voice of the Congress Working Committee. The original Working Committee is the only competent body to deal with this matter. It is true that the original Working Committee has given way to new committees by virtue of dictatorship in the Congress camp, thanks to the repressive policy of Lord Willingdon, whose government seem to be anxious that we should meet and decide upon the withdrawal of the movement.

"This new Committee is competent not to revise the original programme but only to carry out. Even if it is unwilling to pursue the programme, it has to make over charge to some others and it cannot assume the powers of a deliberative body. So far as the individual members of the original committee who are still "free" are concerned, they cannot in the very nature of things, speak for the entire body of the Working Committee. Each one of them individually represents only a fraction of the High Command's voice.

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

"If Lord Willingdon's Government are anxious to sound our opinion on any topic of interest to them, I suggest that it can only be possible if all the members of the original Working Committee are released at once and are free to deliberate on the situation in the light of such facts as may be placed before them.

"Now Vallabhbhai is in jail. So is Pandit Nehru. And there are others . . . All of them must be free to discuss the question in all its bearings . . .

"There can be no question of any one of us giving any kind of assurance prior to the actual meeting of the duly constituted Working Committee.

"This is a simple constitutional position to escape from which is well nigh impossible. But if there is one person who can assume the functions of the entire Working Committee and perhaps of the entire nation, it is Mahatma Gandhi. He is the author of the whole movement which has shaken the mighty British Government. If anyone can speak for the Working Committee, it is undoubtedly the distinguished prisoner of Yeravda. He speaks for all of us. None of the others including myself can speak in any manner that may be considered binding on the Working Committee or the Congress."

Yet they said that the Maulana was ignorant of the English language though when asked what were his pastimes, he frankly admitted they were reading and writing. He is one of nature's few gentlemen striding into our politics with his head erect. There were Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. M. A. Ansari before, both ex-Presidents of the Indian National Congress and to both of whom the Mahatma was exceedingly devoted. Both were gentlemen to the tip of their fingers and made men of lesser breeds envious of their noble breeding. Azad is of that trio and has remained unspoilt since then. Nearly four provinces banned his entry during World War I; but time had its own revenge. Azad lived to become an important member of the Congress Parliamentary Board to boss over some of those very provinces where Congress Ministries

## MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

ruled for nearly twenty-four months before the outbreak of World War II. The late Mahadev Desai, the Mahatma's invaluable private secretary, has brought out an excellent little biography of the Congress President as a tribute of praise to his distinguished services to the Motherland. The Maulana's career throughout has been resplendent for the splendour of his protest against narrow and reactionary communal cries. When the harvest was great and the labourers few, he was the first in the field to offer his services. Hence, he now remains the First Servant of the Motherland and let no one disturb him in rendering that imperishable service.





JOSEPH BAPTISTA





## JOSEPH BAPTISTA

"GANDHI will either bury the Congress or the Congress will bury him," flashed out the classic wit of Indian politics at the Calcutta Congress when the country first went over to Non-Co-operation twenty years ago and burned the boats of Moderatism. Whether the speaker proved a bad or a good prophet, time alone was to show; but this was patent—the speaker's politics finally buried him! Our politics as politics did not lose much by the passing away of Joseph Baptista; for it is a long, wide, and immeasurable stage that exhibits the myriad "ins" and "outs" of many actors; no one is indispensable! But our public life lost its finest wit and humourist by Joseph Baptista's death.

"The Lord gave it and the Lord hath taken it away; blessed be the name of the Lord," was his brief reply when the bureaucracy "unburdened" him of his J.P. for his political "misconduct." Baptista's remark is reminiscent of David Livingstone's reply when he had rough time with the Boers. "By taking possession of all my goods, they have saved me the trouble of making a will."

Baptista's superb command of the English language helped him in his undergraduate days at Cambridge, when he went on an electioneering campaign for a Liberal candidate in the good old nineties. Some one in the hostile audience tried to shout him down, "shut up! shut up, black man!" The young orator was made of sterner stuff; he roared out, "well! better a black man, than a blackguard!" The audience immediately applauded the "black man" and was all attention to him at other meetings. Baptista's withering retort on this occasion reminds one of that smashing sally of the best known speaker of the American

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

House of Representatives, "Czar" Thomas Reed. His retort to a confirmed Republican, when he spat out his anti-Democratic venom was "Your friends sometimes go to sleep, your enemies never do."

Who does not remember Baptista's delightful reply to the late King Albert of Belgium when he arrived in Bombay in 1925. Landing on the shores of India, the Belgian King enquired of the "First Citizen of the City," whether the place on which he stepped was the well-known "Gate of India." "Yes, Your Majesty," came the quick and graceful reply from the then Mayor, "and I am the Gate-keeper."

At Cambridge, his ready tongue found him an appreciative audience amongst the "Co-eds." The imprisonment of the well-known Natu Brothers at Poona provided him a capital occasion for a first-class onslaught against the bureaucracy, when he vigorously moved the resolution in the Union, that "the policy of the Indian Government is unwarranted and unwise." "Beware of the bureaucracy; an unrepresentative and irresponsible system is intolerable in this enlightened century. To prosecute publicists under the autocratic system is to turn the *pen* into the *pen-knife*." The proposition moved by the East Indian orator resulted in his victory. Edwin Samuel Montague, later on the Secretary of State for India and Lord Lytton long afterwards Governor of Bengal and later Acting Viceroy of India, were amongst his youthful audience.

The publicity given in the British press to this debate at the Cambridge University, initiated by young Baptista, got him several invitations for political gatherings, including those from pleasant quarters, where he soon became a favourite. The Cambridge Union debated whether women should be admitted to the degrees of the University. The Light Blues mustered strong on the side of the opposition. Baptista sarcastically referred to their "unholy alliance

## JOSEPH BAPTISTA

and undeserved domination outside the domain of sport," which convulsed the audience with indignation, as after all the women were hopelessly outnumbered by the men. Baptista stood unruffled and placidly asked:—"If the Blues can weigh the scales against the Angels, why not the Blacks on behalf of the Angels?" The Hall of the Union rocked with endless laughter and the Journal of Union recorded the event with the headlines:—

BLUES *vs.* BLACKS.

RAP FROM BAP

DEFEAT OF THE ANGELS

The men won the day to the discomfiture of the "Angels" and their "Black" protagonist became at once the hot favourite of Girton and Newham girls, with pressing invitations for all their teas.

"Angels" reminds us of his speech to an audience, predominantly of women, which he carried from a flight of flattery to a pitch of dismay as he exclaimed:—"When women are good, they are better than Angels; but when they are bad, may the Lord have mercy on us!" Byron sang their praises in the same strain, yet he pointed out the trouble!—"Though women are angels, yet wedlock's the devil." Being a bachelor, Baptista must have observed what some verse-writer opined that "women are in churches, saints; abroad, angels; and at home, devils." Shakespeare seems to have been of the same view in *Othello*: "You are pictures out of doors, bells in your parlours, wild cats in your kitchens, saints in your injuries, devils being offended, players in your housewifery, and housewives in your beds."

"Kaka" Baptista's forte was his impromptu repartee and therein he passed Moliere's test; for it constituted "the touchstone of a man of wit." The present writer remembers a discussion in 1932 amongst his fellow-prisoners in

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

jail about our wittiest speakers, when Bhulabhai Desai recalled a talk with Baptista who had told him that sometimes he used to spend as much as twenty-four hours in preparing his "best shots" to be delivered at public meetings. "Kaka's" quickest replies, the explosions of his wit, fired at random when the adversary took him unawares, do not bear out his own statement!

The sense of humour in him was so remarkable that mere recollection of it brought laughter and cheer at meetings even after his death. Napoleon would have slighted him as a "mere manufacturer of phrases," but the crowd loved him. That he was a darling of the populace was manifest by the sobriquet he earned. "Kaka" stuck on to him, erasing out the sacred name of "Joseph." A nickname is the surest passport to popularity. He spread light and laughter everywhere, though he remained so unhappy in the end.

Engineer, lawyer, politician, journalist, orator, corporator, Mayor and legislator—all rolled into one, made Joseph Baptista the unique combination of Indian politics. One of the founders of the Home Rule movement in India, he was the author and picturesque propagandist of that memorable but elusive phrase of Indian politics, "Responsive Co-operation." Baptista sang the slogan of Home Rule long before it was translated as an effective war-cry for the Indian masses by Mahatma Gandhi. A man of first-class ability, possessing a wide mental range, there was nothing that was beyond his reach. There was much gold in him; though it was freighted with ore. He was the first of his community, with a national reputation, to whom his co-religionists looked up to as a model. His politics were a queer mixture—Congress to him was too mild at one time and too wild at another period! As early as in 1900, the idea of Home Rule emanated from him. Along with Lokmanya Tilak, he toured England to educate public opinion on the question of India. Together they put over

## JOSEPH BAPTISTA

£5,000 out of the public funds collected here, into the then poor coffers of the British Labour Party through the agency of the late Mr. Arthur Henderson, the British Labour Government's first Foreign Secretary. The Lokamanya and his Lieutenant again together attended the Amritsar Congress and it was during their journey that Tilak sent his historic telegram to His Majesty the King offering "Responsive Co-operation." Baptista drafted the telegram and became the author of the phrase, which dominated Maharashtra politics for a long time.

The man who took up the war-cry of Home Rule for India, long before the late Dr. Annie Besant and her militant section swung into the movement, with the passage of time was seized with the communal complex, for which he paid dearly. As Mayor of Bombay, he joined the campaign for a "Christian Group" in the Corporation, on the plea that "a good Christian is invariably a good citizen." When have Christian rights ever been trampled under foot? Have Indian Christians fulfilled their national and civic obligations before demanding rights or safeguards? These questions, Baptista did not put to himself at all. That a political figure of Baptista's nationalist record should have yielded to the temptation of playing the role of a communal advocate, caused his exile, from a field of activity, wherein he played so important a part for over quarter of a century alongside Sir Phirozeshah Mehta and Vithalbhai Patel. He paid the penalty for his transgression. He was not even co-opted a member of the body that elected him Mayor scarcely a year before!

The downward political rush of a once-beloved hero commenced when he deserted his former standard and proclaimed a new allegiance. He had been elected unopposed to the Assembly after the first Swarajist "exodus," but during the next year he could not even get a seat on the Bombay Legislative Council. His defeat was partly, no doubt, due to the "kindness" of his "chief,"

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

Mr. Jayakar, the President of the Responsive Co-operative Party, of which Baptista was the Vice-President. This was his second political reverse within a short time—failure to get elected to the Bombay Municipal Corporation and the Council respectively. A zealous and wary electorate had not forgotten his *volte face* and hence the polls told the decline of the hero's popularity. It had also been patent that Mr. Jayakar had let down Baptista at the elections, in favour of the rival candidate, Dr. Paranjpye.

Henceforth “Kaka” Baptista retired from public life and went out of it a disappointed man! He was thrust into the wilderness and wandered in the by-lanes of communal politics. Accepting the Presidentship of his community's Association, the East Indian Association, he started a communal paper and threw the pearls of his wisdom into the dust of sectarianism.

Labour had found in him one of its earliest, warmest champions, as testified by his association with several trade unions, and his being elected as their spokesman right up to Geneva. The mistress of Law could not claim him as a permanent devotee, for she exacts steadfast, assiduous devotion. The prizes of law were sacrificed for the glamour of politics. He was not enamoured of the idea of amassing a lucrative practice at the Bar. He leapt into fame as the Counsel for Tilak in his well-known Sedition case, and also accompanied him to England to assist him in his fight against the late Sir Valentine Chirol, who was alleged to have defamed the Lion of Maharashtra. It was at this time that Baptista is reported to have declined the offer of a judgeship. It also appears that a hint was thrown to the young lawyer by the judges that he must remember he was defending Tilak in his mere professional capacity and that he should not make any capital out of his position as a Counsel in a political trial! The present writer remembers how gracefully some of his fellow-prisoners from Maharashtra recalled Baptista's services as Counsel

## JOSEPH BAPTISTA

rendered over quarter of a century ago, when a number of Maharashtra youths were hauled up for alleged terrorism after the murder of Jackson, the Collector of Nasik. In those days it was difficult to get a lawyer to defend a political case; now you can get any number of lawyers willing to shoulder the responsibilities of a political trial for nothing!

Joseph Baptista was ever proud to talk and tell of his association with Lokamanya Tilak, especially of his wonderful courage, which remained unaffected when the adverse decision was pronounced in his Defamation case against Sir Valentine Chirol. Baptista used to recount how the late Mr. Justice Darling once finding Lord Carson (Counsel for Sir Valentine) unprepared with materials for defence at the preliminary stage of the case, gave a long adjournment. He wondered if this privilege would so readily have been conceded if Tilak's counsel, Sir John Simon, was in such a fix! Then again the "Kaka" threw a flood of light on the attitude of Sir John Simon himself, who coldly received Tilak's requests to put certain questions in cross-examination, as they were politically unpalatable to the Lord Chancellor. These incidents coupled with the experience of the late Sir Sankaran Nair in his defence against O'Dwyer of "Jalianwala Massacre" notoriety, expose "the impartiality of men seated on the thrones of justice," in the metropolis of the mightiest empire the world has yet seen!

A chapter, personal and political, has yet to be described—one intimately connected with the last year of "Kaka's" life. It is the chapter of Baptista's relations with the Nationalist Christian Party. In June 1930 a few young men met and decided to found the Nationalist Christian Party, the first of its kind in India, when Protestants and Catholics met together for common political action, with distinct leanings towards the Indian National Congress. The old fogies were not consulted and no enlightenment was sought from them. There was a crying need for such a



Conference at London and put the lasting yoke of separatism on his community, in the shape of separate electorates for Indian Christians as granted in the anti-national and anti-rational Communal Award. Sir Samuel Hoare took unto his bosom this reactionary Catholic at the Round Table Conference to completely off-set the strong nationalist influence of the Protestant members, the lamented K. T. Paul and Dr. S. K. Datta, who were distressed at the thought of Indian Christians being saddled with communal electorates. This meeting of the Bombay Catholics, of every party and section, was the first political rally in the history of the community. Joseph Baptista heartily approved of the move and consented to take the chair at the meeting. His views on joint electorates were well-known.

"I thoroughly disapprove of separate electorates for Indian Christians," when he threw the cold blanket on the scheme of some communalist Muslims to rope in the Indian Christians for separate representation, long before the meeting of the Round Table Conference. "The moment you separate the Indian Christians in water-tight constituencies, they cannot have any influence at the polls and on other communities. No Hindu, or Muslim, or European or Anglo-Indian would care for the views or grievances of Indian Christians. If they were included in a general constituency they would have some influence by their votes. *I believe votes are more powerful than mere seats of a limited number . . .* Time will no doubt come when measures will be dealt with on merits alone, without reference to communal interests. But for the present, it is better for the small communities not to alienate the sympathy of the major community by clamouring for separate representation."

When Baptista came to the meeting, he met with a hostile section in that crowded audience. The moment he was proposed to the chair, up rose a Christian patriot and opposed his election. Baptista was not prepared for this encounter. The organisers who put up "Kaka" for the chair fumbled and staggered under the weight of opposition. The speaker declared that Baptista was no more the

## JOSEPH BAPTISTA

beloved "Kaka," no more a Nationalist pioneer Home Ruler, and had lost the confidence of the nationalists. Another speaker said that the one-time disciple and lieutenant of Tilak had fallen in a terribly low political state and the speaker went on to say that he seemed to see the vision of the Lokmanya beckoning him to stop Baptista from misleading his community and country! Laughter and cheers, cries and counter-cheers rang through the Cowasjee Jehangir Hall which perhaps had never before witnessed such a scene. For over an hour, chaos reigned supreme. the organisers of the meeting running helter-skelter, summoning aid from all directions. Baptista turned black with dismay and indignation. A hero of a thousand platforms, one who braved any contingency seemed to be without resource on that occasion! When support and opposition to the motion for Baptista's election to the chair were vociferously rattled, up rose the late Dr. Viegas, who had preceded Baptista by being the first Indian Christian Mayor of Bombay, and declared that the attempt to throw out the proposed chairman was a stab in his back. The opposition was silenced before the words of rebuke addressed by the doyen of the community. The proposition was put to the vote and carried by a majority not without Baptista getting an idea of the wrath incurred by him from the youngsters, burning with nationalist fire.

This was "Kaka" Baptista's last appearance on a public platform and he delivered the last speech of his life. He was destined to live scarcely a fortnight more. His speech epitomised his political past. Though ultimately allowed to occupy the chair by a prepondering majority to which he came by previous pressing invitation of the conveners—he was not allowed to sit without a challenge from the nationalist section, who questioned his very existence as a Nationalist! That occasion brought forth his best oratorical powers. He made a brief, fighting speech, which rang out with words of defiance: "who dare say I am not

a Nationalist or Swarajist? Old days seems to have gone by and young men who were not even born when I was a Swarajist are now opposing me. I have not the slightest idea of retiring from my retirement!" and the audience including those who opposed him accorded him vociferous applause. When he declared that he would stick to his retirement, he reminded us of Lord Rosebery who repeatedly stated that he retired from politics, but went on delivering speeches on the least provocation. "Uncle Joe" thought that the beardless youngsters had gone too far. The gloom of that night's proceedings produced the sparks and glow of a warrior in him, though he must have sensed that politically he had outlived his time. The old man, shocked to find his credentials being vigorously challenged, made the finest effort of his life in that final encounter to stand up like a man—the hero of a hundred political battles.

Trouble was not yet over for him! As soon as Baptista's short speech as Chairman was over and when he called out Principal Aloysius Soares, the principal speaker of the meeting to move the main resolution condemning separate electorates, the present writer rose to speak, to move his adjournment motion as a "mark of respect, esteem and admiration for the thousands of patriots who had made golden sacrifices for the cause of the country, by courting imprisonment in the Civil Disobedience campaign." The writer was greeted with a storm of jeers and the chairman being already wrath with him, would not allow him to proceed, much less give him any protection! On the contrary he threatened to call for the Police and clear him out. A considerable section of the audience absolutely refused to hear the present writer, whilst the members of the Nationalist Christian Party, who were a powerful section of the meeting were equally clamorous in according their support. It was a gruelling duel for another half an hour, immediately following the previous

## JOSEPH BAPTISTA

sensation of the efforts made to install "Kaka" in the chair. The writer was not allowed to open his mouth! There was a complete deadlock for some time and to quote the words of the *Examiner*, an organ of the clergy and laity of Bombay "one side refused to hear Mr. Alva, the mover of the adjournment and another refused to hear anyone else." Amid the din and uproar, the venerable Dr. Viegas again intervened and made a suggestion to adjourn the House for five minutes to honour the jailed patriots and Baptista accepting the suggestion "adjourned the House on his own authority."

Baptista's paper referred to the present writer's "antics having proved him to be the wild man of Borneo," whilst in another breath he damned him as the "notorious Alva sojourning in Bombay," who should be packed off at the earliest opportunity from the city! "What's the name of this young man?" he angrily demanded of the audience, after I stood up to move my adjournment motion; "who dares to flout the chairman's orders to shut up!" Both of us were engaged in a heated argument on the platform—he, as the chairman of the meeting ordering me to get away or promising to make of me a nice present to the Police; and I refusing to budge unless my adjournment motion was accepted or rejected by the audience. Baptista frowned upon the writer—probably being goaded by a suspicion that he had a hand in the opposition to his election. He seemed to even deny the ordinary courtesy of remembering one who had called on him only a few days before the meeting and had conversed with him for a long time. "Kaka" could never say that he did not know the present writer by sight or name, for since the establishment of the Nationalist Christian Party, he had profusely poured his ink to pin us down! Yet in the heat of excitement, when his characteristic wisdom and wit seemed to have failed him for a moment and anger stepped in the breach, he loudly asked of the audience, "What's the name of this

young man?." "He gave us," as Emerson would describe it, "an impression of Achillean wrath and untameable petulance." Others may have discovered that night self-possession and sarcasm wrapt up in that query. However, Baptista knew with what to bait the hook!

Apart from that unforgettable demonstration of temper, Baptista must be given the credit for the ultimate passage of the adjournment motion. He saved the situation, for amongst the audience there were numerous reactionary elements and representatives of the official and semi-official tribe. My motion for the adjournment of the House threw a bomb-shell in those quarters. They were most reluctantly made to give their assent to that motion and thus accord their grudging sympathy to those who had filled the jails in Mahatma Gandhi's campaign of 1930 after the Dandi March. That was a big and influential meeting of Bombay Catholics, representative of a hundred and fifty thousand souls, not without a smattering of J.P.'s *johookumwallas*, reactionaries and we-say-yes-to everything! The Adjournment motion was a counter-blast to the resolution of "loyalty to His Majesty the King-Emperor," passed a month before at the All-India Catholic Conference at Mangalore, with the aid of *padres*, under the presidentship of the late Sir A. T. Pannirselvam, then Home Member of the Madras Government. Poor Pannirselvam later perished tragically in the sands of Iran through an air mishap on his way to be an Adviser to the Secretary of State for India.

Baptista must be given credit for the passage of the adjournment motion. Once he realised its importance, he gave his wholehearted support, adjourning the House, on his "own authority," though he was in no mood to forgive the present writer for his stubbornness. Joseph Baptista handled a hazardous situation—the last one in his life, with consummate skill and adroitness. It was an unparalleled piece of chairmanship; for he realised more than anyone

## JOSEPH BAPTISTA

else in the midst of that riotous noise that the impending rejection of the adjournment resolution would have completely misrepresented the genuine feelings of a large number of Catholics towards the imprisoned patriots and would have created resentment in nationalist circles.

Joseph Baptista died within a fortnight after that meeting. He died a broken-hearted man with a feeling that his was a voice in the wilderness. Several of his friends and admirers have fastened on the head of the present writer the hideous crime of having brought "Kaka" to an early grave! But these pious Christians forgot a fundamental canon of Christianity—the Lord alone is the creator and annihilator of the flesh! Let them not forget that telling Biblical exclamation, "What the Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away!" The cause of his untimely death reminds one of the significant passage in the Autobiography of the late Viscount Haldane, the Lord Chancellor in the first British Labour Government. Whilst on the very threshold of his career as a lawyer, young Haldane was arguing a case before Sir George Jessel, the Master of the Rolls. Let us have it from Haldane's own mouth:

"The case at last came on, before the great Sir George Jessel and two Lords Justices of Appeal. They did not know me by sight, for I had never argued before.

"Jessel, when he had caught the point, began to play with me as a cat does with the mouse. But I had the authorities even more at my fingers' ends than he had, the consequences of portentous study. He could not break me down, for I would not yield an inch. He began to grow excited and to throw the power of his personality into the struggle with me, while his colleagues remained silent. Four o'clock came and he looked very ill. He was suffering from Bright's disease, but such was his courage that he had gone on with his work. Next day, the Court was empty, for the Master of the Rolls was, as we were informed, ill. Next day, we were told that he was dead. The appeal was adjourned, and we were informed that it must be opened afresh on a subsequent

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

date. My brother barristers affected to reproach me for having killed Jessel. If I had, it was indeed unwittingly, for I had the highest admiration and deepest regard for that great Judge."

Jessel died two days after the incident, and "Old Joe" passed away a fortnight after the Cowasji Jehangir Hall tussle. It was a lightning blow on us all, who loved and respected him. Let us also sin no more! *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*—nothing but good should be spoken of the dead! Under the law of Solon, who once wisely ruled the Athenian democracy, the present writer would have been penalised for "speaking ill of the dead." For the injunction of that great Athenian law-giver ran: "It is piety to regard the deceased as sacred, justice to spare the absent, and good policy to rob hatred of its perpetuity." As the unwitting transgressor of this Athenian decree, the writer had he lived in old Athens, would have had to pay down "three drachmas to the person injured, and two more into the public treasury."

Once again, the last bit of conversation with "Uncle Joe" must be recalled. He was shocked with Police atrocities to crush the nationalist spirit engendered by Gandhi's campaign. The famous Tilak Day procession, on 1st August 1930, when the entire crowd of a hundred thousand squatted throughout the night on Hornby Road, in Bombay, in the drenching rain to be dispersed with wild lathi charges by the police, was an event, as Baptista described, such as "had never occurred in the History of the world." He felt like offering his services to the Congress and courting imprisonment as a protest against the repressive measure. The dormant spirit of the fighter seemed to have been roused by the wealth of his association with Lokamanya Tilak, whose death anniversary witnessed such an unparalleled demonstration of a nation's strength in face of the brutal onslaught by the police. To rejoin the Congress ranks in the hour of its trial of strength with the forces of

## JOSEPH BAPTISTA

repression was a golden, genuinely patriotic thought—but his life was cut short within a month! He was laid to his final rest after he lived laborious days.

To his community, in the political field, Joseph Baptista served as John the Baptist. Though like some Irish patriot, he always confined his "social and political enthusiasms within the limits of Catholic discipline, he delighted to march up to the boundary and look across the wall, or perhaps one should say—as a mountain-climber, he looked down from the edge of the cliff." His pioneer work is at once the source of inspiration and warning to the younger members of his community, who would see the light but avoid the pitfalls which dogged his footsteps and marred his career. "Let not his frailties be remembered; he was a great man."







**SAYAJI RAO, GAEKWAR OF BARODA**



## SAYAJI RAO, GAEKWAR OF BARODA

**P**RINCES and potentates are fortunate beings for legends are generally woven around their names. The late Gaekwar of Baroda was exceptionally fortunate with more than one legend to his credit. His birth, his middle age and his death were the three important stages of his life to be connected with such legends. They were mere legends; yet they threw the spotlight of fame on his personality and made him the most enviable amongst the modern Indian rulers. Legends persist in popular memory long after their subject fades away. In this case their romance survived though truth pricked the fiction contained in them.

The first legend was connected with the birth of the peasant boy with king cobra spreading its powerful hood, offering homage and protection to the babe, and announcing a great king. The second was the Delhi Durbar incident of 1911 when the ruler faced his monarch and His Highness turned his back on His Majesty. The last legend was the premature news of his death much before the Lord called him unto his final rest. The first one cast a halo of glory around Sayaji Rao; the second made him the most hated subject of the Political Department of the Government of India, not failing at the same time to make him the darling of nationalist India; and the last gave him a unique opportunity to know before he was actually dead what the world thought of him!

A recent biographer of Lloyd George laid down that "If the Chancelleries of Europe were recruited more extensively from the villages of Europe we might possibly have seen a world shaped after the heart of Lloyd George." The late Gaekwar of Baroda was a shepherd boy from a hamlet in the Nasik District whom Maharani Jamnabai

elevated to the throne of Baroda. His brother princes were too much reared in the lap of luxury to wrench themselves off from their environment; hence their States lay low in the scale of progress. At twelve he was a mere village boy unable to read or write, with his English tutor, marking him down "apparently and actually dull!" It was an amazing achievement for young Sayaji Rao to have mastered four languages, studied four important subjects, and picked up the essentials of administration—all by the age of eighteen or nineteen, so as to make him fit to assume the heavy responsibilities of state. From then started the brightest chapter of princely rule under the aegis of the British in India. Sayaji Rao was not a mere "hereditary ass" as Napoleon dubbed the average Bourbon. He was the son of the soil planted on the line of royalty and reflected greatest credit on the late Maharani Jamnabai's adoption. Fortunately he was not trained like the other young Princes in "institutions which faithfully reproduce the worst features of the English public schools."

The Delhi Durbar incident chilled the enthusiasm of the late Gaekwar though he ruled in all for more than six decades, accomplishing the most comprehensive kind of progress for any State. The alleged insult offered to His Majesty King George V by Sayaji Rao was the glorious sensation of the Delhi Durbar. He had been ordered the previous day to attend a rehearsal where he did not go. The Princes were taught the previous day by the "tin-gods" ruling their destinies in the Political Department as to how to bow, turn and twist when they were face to face with Their Majesties. The Gaekwar had not received "the benefit of the tuition." The bosses of the P. D. raged with fury. Then the next day Sayaji Rao made the unconscious mistake of turning his back on the late King and Queen. He had committed the unforgivable crime of not facing His Majesty even whilst going away. We have his own word for it.

## SAYAJI RAO, GAEKWAR OF BARODA

"I went up to the King, made my bow as I was told and not seeing the exit, I stepped back and asked the officer on duty by what direction I had to go. I did this as he told me . . . I had no earthly reason to insult His Majesty."

The present writer has it on the express word of the proud and noble consort of the late Gaekwar, Her Highness Maharani Chimnabai, that it was a pure mistake and no insult was ever meant to the late King.

But Nationalist India would not have any such explanation much less the Political Department. To the Nationalists, the late Gaekwar threw a thunderbolt across the placid and pathetic waters of Indian contentment, long before Lokmanya Tilak and the Mahatma rocked the foundations of British rule in this country. Here was the noblest prince who asserted the manliness and self-respect of his Order. By this act, the Gaekwar rang out no note of challenge but spontaneously expressed a state of mind surfeited with the correct ideas of equality, transcending rules of arrogant imperial authority.

Thereupon was let loose on him the sternest and brutal reward for higher striving. The cycle of progress so well begun by Sayaji Rao was to be rudely interrupted. His enlightened energy ebbed away under the lightning stroke of the Darbar. Even his intellectual courage failed him; he was a changed man after the Delhi Durbar. His Highness was urged to tender a public apology. Gokhale and his friends in the Imperial Legislative Council unduly alarmed him instead of investing his act with strong moral countenance. They stirred up the dreadful prospect of his dethronement. The failure of his own countrymen to condemn Imperialist bullying offered no hope to the Gaekwar. His Highness found no friend or quarter to render him some kind of moral aid in the crisis of his life.

The whole force of British prestige was arrayed against him and he was submerged under the weight. The

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

authorities refused to allow his only daughter (now Dowager Maharani of Cooch Behar) to be married to the late Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior. The idea of alliance between the two leading States was gall and wormwood to the potentates of the Political Department, wherein no Indian was admitted for decades and decades in the higher secretariat rungs.

The cup of anguish was filled to the brim for the late Gaekwar with the death of his son, Prince Jaysingh in Germany. The press of the world stumbled into a blunder and broadcast the news that the Gaekwar himself was dead. Sayaji Rao was perhaps the world's only great man who lived to enjoy the privilege of knowing what people would have to say of him after he was really dead! The British and the Indian press devoted columns under the genuine mistake that he was dead. But within the next twenty-four hours they realised their mistake. The late Gaekwar profited by this strange and unique experience. Lloyd George once wrote that he avoids—

“two classes of literature—or rather two kinds of printed matter. One is the printed report of my own speeches . . . The other is the biography of my own life. . . . In fact, the only kind of biographical notices about myself which I should be really amused to read, but owing to circumstances I shall have no opportunity of reading are my obituary notices . . . that, to my mind, is, on the whole, the most attractive kind of biography . . . certainly to the victim.”

His Highness Sayaji Rao was the motive force of his State's progress, the fountain-head of Baroda's advancement. A nationalist before the birth of the twentieth century, long before the Swadeshi movement blew in with its fullest force, the late Gaekwar put into action that which British India merely visualised in its dreams and aspirations. His ambition was to march ahead before his brethren in British India thought, talked, discussed and translated into reality. Before Gopal Krishna Gokhale, heroically strove like a titan to get his Primary Education

Bill through the Indian Legislature and was crushed under the weight of disappointment, Sayaji Rao had already introduced it in the nineties of the last century in his own State. Thereby he won the proud distinction of being the first in India to introduce free and compulsory education. Education of girls and that of the backward and depressed classes also was not neglected. The untouchables became bold and brave under the Gaekwar's sway. He tackled the problem of untouchability long before British India even thought of taking it as a serious proposition. Her Highness Maharani Chimnabai told the writer as to how her great husband flatly refused to contribute even a single farthing to venerable Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya for the Benares University funds until the portals of his University were thrown open to the untouchables.

"It is my profound conviction born out of my personal experience that we should afford every opportunity to our less fortunate brethren, that they may be really our equals and not downtrodden creatures. Only then we shall have come nearer to the unity we desire,"

were his watchwords. He granted foreign scholarships to Dr. Ambedkar which enabled the Harijan leader to bag his Doctorates and then find immediate outlet for his activities by being employed in the Baroda State Service.

Sayaji Rao made no distinction between a Hindu and a Muslim, a Parsi or a Christian; he was of the nation. The grant of a pension to Dadabhai Naoroji, the first Indian Member of the British House of Commons and one of the fathers of our nationalist movement, made Sayaji Rao exceedingly popular in nationalist circles. His State attracted the best talents and it constituted the nursery of administrators. W. C. Bannerji, the first President of the Indian National Congress, Romesh Chandra Dutt, our greatest exponent of the evil economic consequences of British rule, Aravinda Ghosh, the revolutionary and mystic political prophet of Hindustan who still commands the unstinted homage of nationalist



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

India though now isolated in the French settlement of Pondicherry, T. Madhav Rao, doyen of statesmen, Abbas Tyabji, sturdy Congressman, who was Chief Justice of the Baroda State, Dr. Sumant Mehta, the Palace Physician who later suffered imprisonment for the Congress cause, Sir Manubhai Mehta, ex-Dewan and Dr. Jivraj Mehta, his patriot son-in-law—these are not merely a jumble of names but the brightest stars of our political firmament. These most distinguished sons of the Motherland fired Sayaji Rao's imagination and enabled him to steal a march over British India.

The Gaekwar shattered the illusion that no part of "Indian India" is a match to that under the benign tutelage of John Bull! The administration reports of some British India provinces have still to emulate the most satisfactory standard of Baroda Reports. The diverse branches of State activity, social, educational and economic, have presented an uncommon spectacle of indigenous effort, untrammelled by alien influence. The Gaekwar went ahead to reach the high-water mark of his ideals. The Indian National Congress went on demanding for decades (and still many of those demands remained unfulfilled) the separation of the Executive and the Judiciary, the introduction of universal education, the introduction of local self-governing institutions, the decentralization of administrative authority, the prevention of child marriage, the marriage of widows and other ameliorative social measures. Every one of these measures was introduced in Baroda with clock-work regularity and efficiency. The social reforms enacted in the State, bore ample testimony to the advanced opinion held by his late Highness on social problems. The Age of Marriage Act, the Hindu Divorce Act and the Freedom of Religion Act put the State at one stroke into the forefront of social progress. The lot of the Baroda citizen was thus infinitely better than that of his brother in any Indian State and even many parts of British territory in India.

## SAYAJI RAO, GAEKWAR OF BARODA

Baroda can boast of a first rate Bank of its own, an international port like Okha where the ships of all nations can be anchored, a big chemical industry established by Tatas besides several cotton mills. All these are the benefits directly accrued from the Gaekwar's rule.

No account of the rule of His Highness Sayaji Rao Gaekwar would be complete without mentioning its famous library system. The library movement in that State has no parallel in the whole of India. It was the direct outcome of the Gaekwar's early foreign travels. Baroda instituted a marvellous system of town and village libraries, a feature almost unknown throughout the East. There is not a single village unprovided with a library and free reading room. This library scheme is achieved with a gross circulation of a million volumes. The Central Library is the third biggest library in India. There are the travelling and children's sections rounding off this system. Any woman anywhere in the whole State can have books selected and delivered to her in her own home free of all cost. This for every man and his wife and their children! All this is the outcome of the mature genius of a man who was ignorant of the three R's until he was a boy of twelve who strongly felt that "educationally our people are a little better than beasts." Much credit is due to an American, Mr. Borden, who put Baroda on the map of the Library world. The Gaekwar had gone on his second tour of the United States, before the Delhi Durbar incident. There he met Mr. Borden, the organiser and director of a State Library. He had served his apprenticeship as an instructor in the first library school organised in the nineties of the last century under the auspices of the Columbia University, by Dr. Melville Dewey, that pioneer of the world library movement. Mysore State later introduced the system on the Baroda model.

Sayaji Rao met the world's outstanding men and garnered grains of wisdom from their illimitable storehouses. He met Booker T. Washington, Theodore Roosevelt and

Edison. Her Highness Maharani Chimnabai who first walked into the palace without knowing to read and write later underwent a thorough system of self-education which put her on the top of the All-India Women's platform. She was freely able to parley with all the celebrities of Europe and America. She was received in America as the modern Rani of Jhansi, for she was regal in appearance and progressive in her outlook. She was the driving force behind many of her husband's spirited and bold acts. She looked a real Queen amongst the Ranis of India. The royal couple once landed in Japan under a seven-column banner headline in the press running, "HIS HIGHNESS MAHARAJA OF BARODA, EMPEROR OF INDIA." His Imperial Majesty, the then Mikado, perhaps the grandfather of the present ruler there, showered lavish attention on them, amidst solemn ceremony and much bowing. The then Emperor of the Land of the Rising Sun deigned it fit to step down his throne and bow in honour to the Ruler of Baroda. Yet the latter was humiliated by the petty-minded rulers of the Political Department of the Government of India for making the mistake of walking straight back after he had rendered his homage to their Imperial Majesties of Great Britain, the Emperor and Empress of India!

Unfortunately the Delhi Durbar incident almost crushed out of existence the Gaekwar's glowing enthusiasm to go ahead and reach the pinnacle of progress. It was a case of a flower in bloom mercilessly plucked out by an irate gardener. From now came the tightening of the grip alongside with much interference by the British Residents in the affairs of the State. Where there was election before, nomination was resorted to. The Gaekwar now became the repository of all power. Nothing of importance, of a major or minor character was effected without the sanction of His Highness. He was to sit in London or Paris but he set his finger firmly on the pulse of administration, more firmly than warranted by the distance. Some kind of reaction seemed

## SAYAJI RAO, GAEKWAR OF BARODA

to have set in with its attendant weakness, after the chapter of resplendent activity. The Gaekwar's uninterrupted absence from his own State elicited the remark of an ex-Secretary of State for India as evidenced in Morley's *Recollections* that he "did not let the host displace the Minister ....and gave him some paternal admonition on his prolonged absence from the State."

However, Baroda still stood in the vanguard of progress. It was one of the biggest four or five States of India and it still claimed a pride of place amongst them all. Its purity of administration was high, a standard maintained by the Maharaja Pratapsing, the present Gaekwar of Baroda, assisted by an able Madras Civilian, Sir V. Krishnamachari as his Dewan. The excellence of Baroda's administration is almost untouched by any other State. The Rule of Law as first established by Sayaji Rao Gaekwar dominated the length and breadth of the State so as to glaringly bring out the utter deficiencies of other States. The entire array of our Princely Order with the bare exception of half a dozen Princes would do well to worship at the shrine of Baroda and exclaim as Peter the Great did in Paris at the tomb of Cardinal Richelieu, "Thou great man, I would have given thee half of my dominions to have learned of thee how to govern the other half."

But will the five hundred and eighty-one and odd Native States in India learn any lessons at all? Of them only twenty-one have revenue incomes of over fifty lakhs. The smallest of them has the glorious annual revenue of eighty rupees and claims only twenty-seven individuals for its subjects. About seventy of these States have less than Rs. 10,000 revenue. Two hundred and eighty-three are in Kathiawar and some of the smaller ones have no police at all. Yet they will blaze forth their treaties, sanads and rights in the face of Nationalist India. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru reacted strongly to this kind of talk and angrily called those who indulged in it as "lunatics, knaves or

fools." Morley once reminded an Indian Ruler of his craze for salutes and picturesque entertainment, which he chaffingly mentioned in his letter to the then Viceroy, the late Lord Minto :—

"I explained him how sorry I was not to have twenty-one guns, though I have a six-chambered revolver for a suburban burglar. I wondered what all the saints and sages on my bookshelves would think of the Oriental potentate taking five o'clock tea and home-made bread and butter among them."

Go into the histories of these Rulers and no one will envy them the so-called immunity they enjoy against the interference of the Political Department of Government of India, aided and abetted by the Official British Residents stationed in their respective territories. The late Maharaja of Alwar first became the *bete noir* of the Political Department for the crime of "not wearing his Orders and decorations on State occasions," though he professed that he was not versed in the niceties of official procedure.

Edwin Samuel Montague described the pathetic and mean treatment meted to the late Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior, the father of the present young and dashing ruler. The incident of the *pugree* as described by Montague indicates the depth of the subjection to which these helpless but leading rulers were made the victims by the Political Department. Thus wrote Montague, who had power to over-ride bullying Political Secretaries and interfering Residents in his *Indian Diary* :

"Scindia is one of the best fellows I know and none of the treatment he has received makes any difference to his loyalty, but it is astonishing that wherever one traces the hand of the Government of India one sees these absurd personal questions. Scindia told me this morning that when he was in Delhi he was severely reprimanded for taking his *pugree* off after the Viceroy had left. He is not allowed to appear at dinner without his head cover . . . . He says that whenever somebody like Chelmsford, or a Governor, or myself, comes to shoot with

## SAYAJI RAO, GAEKWAR OF BARODA

him he has to wear a pugree to shoot in, although he risks sunstroke by doing so. We live and learn."

Thank goodness that the youthful son of the former ruler, the present incumbent on the *gadi* can at least walk up the Race paddock and be press-photographed bareheaded, with the Viceroy and Vicereine, on his left and right side respectively, or the Governor and his wife in the same positions. The princes have been able to wrest at least this privilege, with the march of time !

Poor "Mr. Gurcharan Singh" was no less than the ex-Maharaja of Nabha, who incurred Lord Curzon's wrath by walking out when His Lordship insulted Indians as "a race of liars." The brave Sikh ruler lived in penury, deprived of his titles and kingdom for standing up boldly in defence of his rights. He was a victim of systematic oppression at the hands of the Political Department and no relief was granted to him right upto the time of his death last year.

Who can forget the sharp rebuke administered to the Nizam of Hyderabad by the late Marquis Reading on the eve of his departure from the Viceroyalty of India in regard to the sovereignty of his State. The ex-Lord Chief Justice of England hammered the point of British Paramountcy beyond the shadow of a doubt and made the Princes feel that they were nothing but subservient creatures of the British in India.

Sir Henry Cotton, a former British Administrator wrote in his book, *New India*:

"It would perhaps be ungenerous to probe too narrowly the dependent position and consequent involuntary action or the feudatory chiefs. They are powerless to protect themselves . . . technically independent of the suzerainty of the Empire, they are practically held in complete subjection. Their rank and honours depend on the pleasure of the British Resident at the Court and on the secret and irresponsible mandates of a Foreign Office at Simla."

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

Another frank critic of the Princes, a Britisher at that wrote in a sarcastic vein:—

“The product of this protection, plus an English education, is a kind of public school Raja, the delight of the society gossip-pedlar. The English girl of the middle classes who would call his poorer countrymen “niggers” and nourishes an almost religious horror of social contact with them, finds race prejudice no barrier when confronted by the public school Raja. Indeed, she is even proud to be seen dancing with them . . . A good bank balance and the correct school tie will even atone for a brown skin though a white skin needs neither . . . It is hard to get him (the Indian Prince) to take the least interest in the affairs of his subjects . . . If a second Akbar were born in India we should not let him rule in his own way.”

The way that the Princes have been won over and made to dance to the tune of the chiefs of the Political Department of the Government of India, recalls to our mind the old episode in Spanish history of Sertorius, the Roman general who spread the ascendancy of his State in the Iberian Peninsula :—

“Sertorius used gold and silver without stint for the decorations of their helmets and the ornamentation of their shields and furnishing them with the means to do this, and sharing their love for beautiful array . . . But most of all were they captivated by what he did with their boys. Those of the highest birth, he collected together from the various peoples and set over them teachers of Greek and Roman leaning; thus in reality he made hostages of them, with the assurance when they became men he would give them a share in administration and authority. So the fathers were wonderfully pleased to see their sons in purple-bordered togas, very decorously going to their schools, and Sertorius paying their fees for them, holding frequent examinations, distributing prizes to the deserving and presenting them with golden necklaces.”

Like the old Spanish youths from the nobility, our Princes are decked with silver and gold; they are no better than hapless hostages to Britain !

## SAYAJI RAO, GAEKWAR OF BARODA

In this big scheme of things, the bulwark of British rule in India, let us not forget the miserable subjects of these rulers. The States people look to their brethren in British India to break their chains of slavery. But both of these people are under the bondage of monarchs and potentates. The States people want to be freed and in their turn the Indians look beyond their own borders to their number being enforced so as to smash the shackles imposed on them all. If some of the links are destroyed then the whole chain will go to pieces. The people of the States and their sympathetic brethren across the frontiers will have to crush together the policy which makes the British the arbiters of our fate in regard to the *time* and *pace* of our change. Then only we shall find breathing time for our all-round, natural development.

This is the picture of the exalted order of Princes, ruling a third of Hindustan. His Highness Sayaji Rao, the late Gaekwar of Baroda was a shining star in the galaxy of our Princes; for he was probably the ablest, the wisest, the best-informed, and most patriotic amongst them all. He was loved and respected by the Indian people as a distinguished patriot, who with all his faults and handicaps of environment, struggled hard to make the best of one of the greatest tasks Indian history had assigned him. When the late King Edward VII of England died, an Englishwoman companion of the Maharani Saheba shed tears of sorrow. On hearing about this, Sayaji Rao remarked with gravity:—“Here’s an Englishwoman who feels distressed on hearing the news of her monarch’s death, whom she had never once seen. I wonder how many in my own State would feel for me on my passing away as that poor Englishwoman felt for her lord.” A noble thought this; but how many of our Princes think that way and rule in that manner ?

The ideals and aspirations of His late Highness Sayaji Rao Gaekwar of Baroda, are admirably set out in his Open-



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

ing Address at the Second World Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1933:—

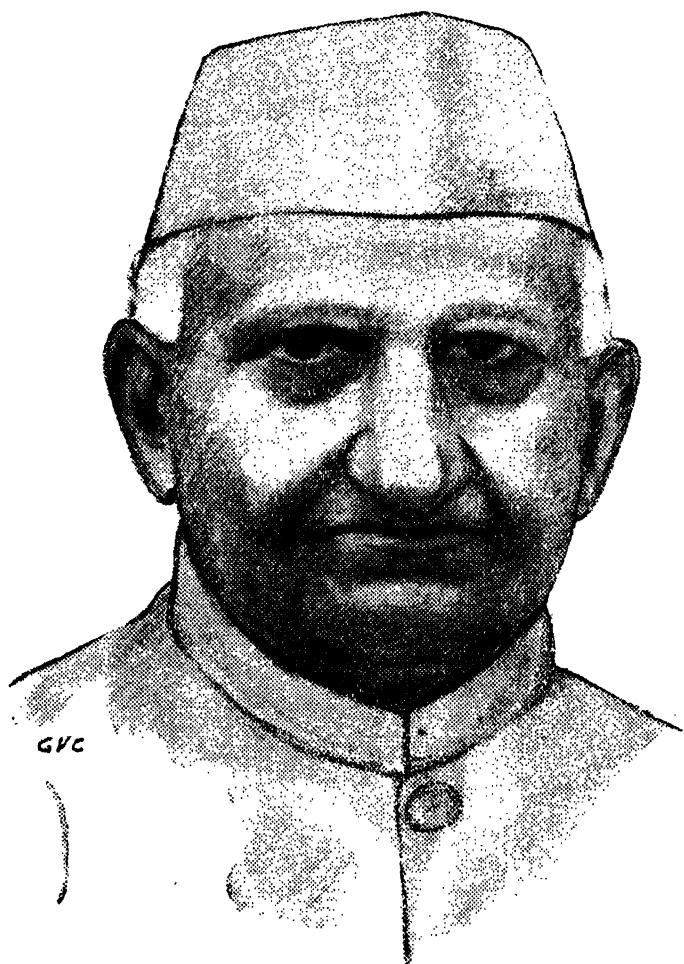
“Religion is a cry for life, a yearning for reality, a demand for loyalty. Man needs a simple, strong, sincere, and serene faith. He needs a rousing call to forget self, and to triumph over sense.

“Christianity calls men to crucify the lower self. But it is paralysed by the snobbery and colour-ban of Christians. It can do much if it recovers its true fundamentals—Love of a loving God and love of men who are our brethren.

“We in India affirm that all creatures are one; but we have lost our sense of proportion. We spare malarial mosquitoes and plague-bearing rats; but we bear heavily on the human family, and do harm to millions of our fellowmen. We must pray to be led back from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from exaggeration to balance. There is no God higher than the truth, no beauty without harmony.

“What can true religion do? It is the pursuit of absolute values; and so it can insist that in an age of transition and chaos, certain values as faith, hope, love; certain great principles such as partnership and self-sacrifice, abide. Religion is also the quest for reality and life; it must get rid of sham, and the dead hand of tradition and taboo, if it is to live and to be real. Again it must express itself simply and clearly, so that the way-faring man and the needy masses see it as bread and not a stone; it must remember the poor and the ignorant.”

Thus Sayaji Rao sang his psalm of life, his excellent confession of faith, of love, truth and beauty and equality for everyone. He possessed the wisdom of a David who fought a number of Goliaths around him. Wasn't he a mere peasant boy who rose to the throne of Baroda in a blaze of glory. He recognized his limits as a King by the simple rule that every monarch is subject to the mightier One. He was a true man amongst the Princes and a real Prince amongst the peoples of Hindustan. May his soul rest in peace!



**BHULABHAI JIVANJI DESAI**



## BHULABHAI JIVANJI DESAI

**"A**N ounce of practice is worth tons of words," declared a speaker twelve years ago when the Simon Commission was gallivanting the country under closed doors and forced-receptions. That realistic remark was prefaced to the students, when the present writer proposed a vote of thanks to the speaker at that meeting. The vast community of students just then flared up and exhibited its formidable latent strength. Whoever heard that remark never dreamt that the super-aristocrat, leading Counsel of the Bombay High Court would soon exchange his grand way of living for the rigours of prison life. The writer was privileged to witness the translation of those timely words into reality in the quarantine yard of the Nasik Road Central Prison. Those of us who were fellow-prisoners of Bhulabhai Desai were remarkably struck with the exceedingly easy manner in which he carried himself within the jail-walls.

Macaulay said something likewise :—"An acre in Middlesex is better than a principality in Utopia." In his own way, loving poetry as he does, Bhulabhai thought it worthwhile to have one hour of crowded glory to an age without a name. As a student he stood first in History Honours whilst graduating and was offered a Government of India Scholarship for the Indian Civil Service. Being the only surviving child of the family, his widowed mother did not permit him to go abroad with the exhortation :—"If you give up this idea, you my dear lad will live to be a better man!" That wise mother proved even a better prophet than her own son. Repeated offers of a Puisne Judgeship of the High Court, and the offer of the Executive Councillorship of the Bombay Government and later

that of the Law Membership of the Government of India were more than compensatory for the loss, if any, of a career in the Civil Service. Madness in the fury of fighting for freedom was ultimately preferable to him than the cold, dispassionate, deathlike servility embodied in all the glittering prizes of the bureaucracy. Bhulabhai was content with the madness of a hero fighting for freedom. He had seen the fate of the Moderates and had shared their sorrows at one time—for their watchwords had been agitate, agitate and agitate every time and if rejected, then act constitutionally !

“I am a man of the street ; I was born of poor agriculturists and had to walk five miles to school at the age of seven to learn the rudiments of Gujarati characters. Hence I am of the people and to the people do I belong,” were his revealing remarks to the farmers of Bardoli, amidst whom he was born over sixty-five years ago. As a school boy, in his native district of Surat, he thrilled his audience which included the British Civilian Magistrate, by his superb acting of the part of Sergeant Buzfuz. The “Boy Counsel” for the plaintiff so acted the part that any jury would have awarded substantial damages to the harassed widow for the breach of promise of marriage. Had Dickens been present, he could not have chosen that day in the crowd of school boys a better Counsel than that village-school boy of a Bhulabhai.

“Sergeant Buzfuz began by saying that never in the whole course of his professional experience—never, from the very first moment of his applying himself to the study and practice of the law—had he approached a case with feelings of such deep emotion, or with such a heavy sense of the responsibility imposed upon him—a responsibility, which he would say, which he could never have supported were he not buoyed up and sustained by a conviction so strong, that it amounted to positive certainty that the cause of truth and justice, or, in other words, the cause of his much injured and most oppressed client, must prevail with the high minded and intelligent dozen of men

whom he saw in that box before him . . . A visible effect was produced immediately . . . . ”

Then on and on until he piled on piles to the admiration of that early school-day audience until it swelled to the large audience of every Indian Court and the dusty precincts of the law reports.

Bhulabhai having passed out, Gokhale cast his eyes on him and hinted that the young man after his due apprenticeship under him should one day be his successor to the *gadi* of the Servants of India Society. But Bhulabhai passed him by; he promised to join him after he made his first thousand . . . but the thousand ran into hundreds of thousands until the call of the Mahatma revolutionised his way of life.

As a lawyer, Bhulabhai easily ranks amongst the two or three best in Hindustan. His career at the Bar blasted the idea of importing “legal experts” from abroad. When he began at the Bombay High Court Bar, it was dominated by nearly twenty European members whose indispensability was dinned into the ears of lesser fry, until at the end of three decades, almost every one of the European Barristers disappeared and left the field clear for Bhulabhai and other Indians to lead. Bhulabhai was the youngest of the seniors and he remained to lead them all. The Right Honourable M. R. Jayakar, Mahomed Ali Jinnah, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, Sir Jamsedjee Kanga, Mr. Taraporewalla and all the others who have led the Original Side Bar of Bombay started before him and Bhulabhai came later on the scene; but he lived to be first in the race and make headway. His chambers turned out the most distinguished “devils.” He fathered the embryonic judges who have graced different benches. The Hon’ble Mr. Justice Kania, K. M. Munshi, Mr. M. C. Setalvad, the ex-Advocate-General, M. D. Lalkaka, the potential Chief Judge of the Bombay Small Causes Court, were Bhulabhai’s “devils” at one time or another. The European Chief Justice of Travanc-

core High Court was another of his "devils." Bombay's first woman barrister and other Portias have also sat in his chambers and his rooms have had the distinction of accommodating the largest number of advocates and barristers in the town.

As Counsel, Bhulabai held the retainer for every place of vantage and importance—the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, the Bombay Municipal Corporation, the Imperial Bank, the Port Trust and all the three foremost railways of the country—G. I. P., B. B. & C. I., and E. I. R. Being in close touch with most of the important lines, he asserted on the floor of the Central Legislative Assembly that he understood every single railway problem better than those who called themselves experts and were imported from abroad. Yet they insisted on their point of view and allowed reaction and inefficiency to flourish!

Bhulabhai appeared in numerous *causes celebre* splashed in the law reports but one of his outstanding cases was his defence in the sensational and most interesting criminal trial of Colonel Collins. It was his first appearance in a criminal sessions of the Bombay High Court and he loved to recall how Sir Jamshedjee Kanga, then Advocate-General of Bombay, who led the prosecution, *poohpoohed* him as a mere novice of the criminal courts. Incidentally they said almost the same thing about him when he entered the Delhi Assembly, and prophesied a failure for the "Novus homo" of politics, whom the jail had just thrown out on the wide world! The defence of Colonel Collins was no easy matter. He had won the Distinguished Service Order for excellent work in World War of 1914 and had his only boy at Eton at the time of his continued imprisonment in three continents of the world. Towards the end of 1916, the late Lieut.-Col. Charles Glenn Collins accompanied by two ladies was on a world tour. After touring various countries, the party arrived in India about the beginning of 1917.

Travelling as a rule in special saloons and living lavishly, they gave the impression of great financial resources, and rumour had it, that during the month of January-February, 1917 they spent over £15,000/- in India. They purchased pearls and jewellery from three different merchants in Bombay and Delhi but they seemed to have run short of cash, though according to the defence of Col. Collins they possessed ample resources. The purchases were on credit, payable by drafts at intervals. The party returned to America by which time the drafts became payable and were dishonoured and a sum of Rs. 1,60,000/- became due to the three Indian jewellers.

A warrant was issued at the instance of one of the aggrieved merchants and the late Col. Collins was arrested at New Orleans in November 1917. Extradition proceedings were instituted and vigorously conducted on both sides, extending over five years. The matter was fought out in three or four Courts of the United States and ultimately the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that Col. Collins could be extradited on the demand of the Government of India. Collins was unlucky; he was detained in American jails for nearly a thousand days during which time the extradition proceedings had to be decided upon; worse still, he remained in custody in Bombay for more than seven months.

Bombay European Society was rent in two on the question of the prisoner being brought to book. One section of the British society thirsted for his blood and another went all out for his innocence. Bhulabhai presented a magnificent defence. Seldom had a Bombay Jury heard such a sonorous, eloquent and outright-winning address. The Jury succumbed to the spell of the "Criminal-novice-Counsel." Lady Lloyd, the wife of the then Governor of Bombay, sat on the right of the presiding judge, to hear his memorable address to the jury. The result was an acquittal. Mr. Leslie Blunt, of Craigie Blunt & Caroe, a



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

leading firm of European Solicitors, would not handle the defence brief unless he had Bhulabhai for the prisoner in the dock. On his acquittal, the prisoner instantly sobbed in utter distress and gratitude for what his celebrated defender did for him.

In the precincts of the Nasik Jail in 1932, the writer arranged a series of lectures by Bhulabhai on "My Cases," "Judges and Attorneys I have met" and "Reflections on Law." We had in our midst a dozen advocates, half a dozen barristers and the same number of solicitors headed by Kher, Mangaldas Pakvasa, the Speaker of the Bombay Upper Legislature, Nagindas Master, Motichand Kapadia and Shantial Shah, the Congress Socialist leader. The announcement of the series roused a great deal of interest amongst the prisoners; the learned lecturer was taking a mental note of what he had to say and felt happy about our enthusiasm. Motichand Kapadia, who was in a distant yard away from us along with Kher and others, put in a plea to the Jail Superintendent that he and others be allowed to attend the lectures. Have you heard of such a thing being permitted within jail walls; though it is not at all a secret that some of the finest group political meetings where great decisions have been taken have been held inside the jails? The lecture programme was smashed, when the distinguished lecturer and then this humble-law-student of an organiser were both sent for by the Superintendent. If you ask for anything inside a jail, it will never be granted. If you feel you are doing something good and reasonable and for the benefit of your fellow-men, do it and damn the consequences. If you tell the Jail authorities that a yard of yarn is wasted, they may promptly waste a thousand yards! Reason and sanity are absent in jail regulations; in the first place many of the jailors and warders themselves do not carry out the spirit, sometimes even the letter of the Jail Manual. Fear and constant fear of what-will-happen-to-you-next always rule the destinies.

of the political prisoners as well as those of forlorn, wretched and neglected criminals.

Bhulabhai held his court there as the finest raconteur we had met anywhere. Our yard of thirty cells contained a conglomeration of characters, with Bhulabhai as the presiding deity. Who were the rest? Jairamdas Daulatram, a model of a prisoner, patriot and gentleman to the tip of his fingers, Mangaldas Pakvasa, (the Speaker of the Bombay Legislative Council) allied with stern and unbending Morarji Desai, ex-Revenue Minister of the Bombay Congress Government, shy, unassuming and brilliant Jaiprakash Narayan, whom an obliging bureaucracy picked up from Behar and put amongst us, (we shall write more about him elsewhere), the pair of Kumarappa brothers, J. C. and Bharatan, who preserved their bright light under a bushel, Seth Soorji Vallabhdas, the merchant prince of Bombay, who lived on milk and fruits, condescendingly allowed him by the Government to compensate him for the loss of "A" class treatment, M. R. Masani, thinking out plans for the Congress Socialist Party in conjunction with Charles Mascarenhas, ever set on manoeuvres and C. K. Narayanswami, who carried the loud voice of a walking journalist with him, Hafiz Ali Bahadur Khan, reciting his own rousing Urdu verses, dear Doctor M. R. Vijayakar, who cooked so well for all of us and made himself so indispensable, but alas is no more with us, dear Champaklal H. Kotak, that fine young patriot and the first aviator of the Bombay University who died in Shanghai after amassing wealth but whose poor physical frame was wrecked within that jail on his reduction from B class to C class, the two Barristers, Bharuchas, not brothers, but veritable brothers in mischief and merriment, Balvantrai Thakore (who afterwards became the Mayor of Ahmedabad but is also cut off from us by cruel death) and his son, Indravadan, Narayandas Bechar, the obliging Karachi Legislator and labour leader ever feeding criminals with his ample rations which

he managed to increase with his suavity, T. Vyas, who is now a Presidency Magistrate at Bombay, Sarabhai Chotalal Parikh, the young Ahmedabad patriot whom everyone dubbed as the double of Subhas Chandra Bose, minus his height, and Hariprasad Mehta, the veteran Ahmedabad M.L.A.—these were the galaxy of characters arrayed in those front barracks beside the office of the Nasik Jail.

Every evening, after meal time, but before locking up, we mustered strong and everyone opened out his pot of fun. Who can forget the Zulu dance the writer was forced to contribute by being veritably stripped naked and having a ton of charcoal and oil splashed all over his body to give him the real colour of a South African—not that he is already in possession of a charming countenance. The sight was so unexpected and realistic that Bhulabhai improvised a garland and put it around the dancer's neck. Keki Bharucha was then ordered to give a specimen of the fox-trot which he deftly performed. It was a small kingdom of which Bhulabhai was the proud chieftain, wherein the brightest conversation prevailed, the joint and common stock of everyone who fired and misfired without rancour or bitterness, gave a blow and took several. Bhulabhai set the ball rolling every evening. He could have endlessly communicated even with the silent stones if left alone on a lonely island! Wit was the salt of Bhulabhai's conversation; it did not however replace his vast knowledge, available for anybody's free tapping. His wit enlivened the dull moments inside that prison-house. A celebrated Lord Chancellor, Lord Haldane, picked out the late Mr. Justice Holmes, one of the greatest judges of the English-speaking world, with Morley and Gambetta, as the three best talkers known to him. Marking out their traits, Haldane found Gambetta a specialist in monologue; Morley drew less from others when he was in the midst of a conversation but Judge Holmes was different. With him, it was a matter of purest conversation, in which all parties

spontaneously participated, including the opponents. It was "an exciting hunt after a quarry . . . it allowed an honest play to the opponents and there was no assumption of superiority."

Bhulabhai attended, spoke, endlessly related sparkling anecdotes and ceased when he had nothing more to state. We rubbed and polished our brains against each other's. Egotists cannot converse; they only talk to themselves. Conversation surrenders your soul to your brethren. "Reasonable men are the best dictionaries of conversation," wrote Goethe. Hence it was that the excellent fare of conversation and good discourse sank our differences and we sought agreements. But all this was gone with Bhulabhai's sudden removal one night to the Jail hospital. He contracted high fever with bad teeth and gums that became septic, and caused delirium. The apothecary doctors inside the jail got panicky. He would have been a dead man that night but for a timely iodine injection that saved his life. Later he was removed to the city hospital and released. But gone were the days when he sat every evening and chatted endlessly. With Bhulabhai gone, the cement of the company was removed, and the thirty odd companions split into a dozen conversational groups. Each had his own way when the referee was removed. To put it in his own impressive language on the floor of the Assembly :—

"In the Nasik Jail, as we had plenty of time and seeing that we had established a real, genuine democracy and equality between ourselves we came to know every single prisoner and gladly learnt to know that the meanest was as good as the best of us."

It was a pity that during his second term of imprisonment, we missed him in the Nasik Jail in 1941; as he was in the select crowd of ministers, headed by that champion-ministry maker, the Sirdar. Bhulabhai would have loved to be in the Nasik crowd and gladly imparted to us more

fun, laughter and cheer and wealth of anecdote than to the small circle of half a dozen big wigs at Yeravda. He was released from the Yeravda Jail during his second term of imprisonment on account of serious illness.

Bhulabhai narrated the story of his first imprisonment and exposed the autocracy clothed under the form of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, in one of his earliest speeches in the Assembly :—

“I was arrested one fine morning and taken to Nasik and detained there on the allegation that I was disturbing the peace of the land. I was detained there for two months. I am going to show you, Sir, what this “law and order” is, of which you are proud; Sir, if this is “law” you must be prepared for its disobedience. Then a very suave Secretary to Government comes round and says : “I have got an order for you, because you are going out to-morrow. You will remain within the precincts of Nasik in which you have got no house, no food, no water. If you get out of that place, you have committed an offence.” Imagine the word “offence”! Having done that, the Magistrate comes on to me after two or three days. I happened to remain in the city because I wanted to meet my children; and at the end of three days the Magistrate comes round and says, “It is very inconvenient Mr. Desai, you can neither practise your profession nor do anything else. What is the good of that? Why don’t you do this? If you drive past my bungalow (that is, a furlong outside), you thereby commit an offence. Then your car will be boarded by my Deputy Superintendent of Police. Then you will come to my house; you do not want to attract large crowds. Then I will punish you. And, then I will send you to jail.” This is what you call “law,” “Justice” and “trial!” Instead of that, it would have been much more honest, much more straightforward, during the course of last movement to say : “I suspect A.B.C. I sentence him for five years without any trial on the mere order of the executive government that he be imprisoned for a period of five years.” But they realise, shrewd as they are, that they make it appear to the people that a Magistrate has tried me for the offence . . . What happened to me. “Im-

prisonment for two years, and Rs. 10,000/- fine"—for what? "You went out of Nasik" Is that an offence—but that is your law, those are the "laws" you expect us to obey and if we do not obey, you call it breach of the law and order! Sir, I never knew that travelling in India was an offence!"

Thus Bhulabhai got on the right track and entered the Legislative Assembly to be its Leader of the Opposition by right of his being the leader of the largest party in the House. The triple tiara adorned him—the leadership of the Bar, the leadership of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee and the leadership of the Opposition in the Central Assembly. He claimed sacred connection with the Congress as it was in the very hall where the Indian National Congress held its first sessions nearly five and fifty years ago—the hall of the Gokuldas Tejpal Boarding School at the Gowalia Tank in Bombay, where young Bhulabhai and about twenty other boys used to debate on every topic under the sun, especially on Indian national problems with "an importance, innocence and ignorance all equal in themselves." In his maiden speech in the Assembly, welcoming the election of the Speaker, Sir Abdur Rahim, Bhulabhai humbly begged that he may show a certain amount of consideration for novices like himself. But the novice soon turned into the master of debate, with every detail of procedure at his finger tips. He kept his party members in trim, displaying noteworthy discipline, an improvement on the old Swarajist Party, some of whom were notorious deserters—of course, through no fault of the great Pandit Motilal. The Congress offensive on the constitutional front stiffened and it scored numerous victories by clever manoeuvring and party alliance. The largest number of visitors, the largest number of divisions and of adjournment motions and even the longest debates, with record series of successes, were witnessed under Bhulabhai in his unique leadership of the Congress Party in the Assembly. The bureaucracy suffered several reverses, but the most

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

conspicuous was when the Government after the Great War II wanted to rush through credits and the Congressites mustered their forces and defeated the motion. On that occasion Bhulabhai delivered the finest speech of his career as the leader and the house seldom heard a speech of such eloquence, reasoning and fervour. On his return to his city, he was accorded a rousing reception at the Bombay Central Station, in appreciation of his oratorical triumph and feat of leadership which exposed the hollowness of the Government claim that the country was behind their war aims. It was a tragedy that men like him who should have run the Government of the country have to waste their lives in frustration and opposition. The leader of the Opposition in free countries normally wrests the post of Prime Minister; but Bhulabhai had to seek the solace of the dungeon.

As a speaker, his speeches were an unregulated flow of eloquence; entirely impromptu, they possessed beauty of force and strength of emotion as well as appeal to the intellect. He was the despair of reporters for they were unable to cope with his Niagara rush of ideas. He could not break the habit of a life-time of not preparing his speeches. A master of diction, he is no mean speaker either in English or Urdu. His Urdu speeches cast a spell on the Muslim masses as his English ones do not fail to win the unstinted admiration of English audiences.

Bhulabhai's speeches make telling mass appeal, but he is not of the masses. He retires into his reserve and does not love a fight, unless it is thrust on him. Hated both by Socialists as well as by Liberals, he is far behind the first group and too far ahead of the latter, who consider him as a deserter from their ranks. The year before he first courted imprisonment, Bhulabhai paid nearly a lakh and quarter of rupees as tax and super-tax. He financed the Congress electioneering campaigns of more than one province

of the country. His wealth accumulated by the fabulous fees he earned at the Bar, has not been proportionately placed for the cause of the country in the manner of C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal; but he has not been niggardly in donating requisite funds for public purposes. He acquired his position by working 280 days a year at the rate of ten hours a day and expected others to do likewise. The Socialists would nail him to a counter for the hatred, nay contempt, he bears them; but he possesses the supreme gift of adaptability which would be his saviour in a completely Socialist state. His only beloved and patriotic son, Dhirajlal, who efficiently ran the Bombay Congress movement in the days of Individual Satyagraha campaign, hobnobs with the Communists and finds plenty of attraction in their programme; his charming wife being an admirer of their sufferings.

Bhulabhai is the least communal minded of our front-line politicians. He professes no religion and thunders against anyone handing over, as he states, "his soul or body in the keeping of a *pujari* or a priest or a maulvi." He wants to "fight the domination of the mind by the society and the domination of the heart by false religious values." He is definitely against religion being given any place in politics; though he always fights without rancour and loses without bitterness. He has encouraged no communalist activity and brings to bear the most refreshing mind on national politics. He rapped out against Jinnah in the course of a debate when he gave a definite inclination of his national mind:—"No distribution before acquisition!" He goes further and puts his finger on the correct spot:—"It is not the country, nor Mahatma Gandhi, who has failed you; it is you who have failed the country as well as Mahatma Gandhi." His study of Islam acquired through his study of Urdu and also as a professor of History and Economics at the Gujarat College at Ahmedabad over forty years ago, helps him to dive into the eight-hundred-year



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

old history of Islam in India and triumphantly assert that Hindus and Muslims were then born of the same grand-fathers. His deep knowledge of history will tell you that the early Moghul Emperors, the real conquerors became a servile population willing to serve their masters, the conquered, as hewers of wood and drawers of water, with no sullen sense of superiority like the present rulers. The conquered and the conquerors, both lived together in solidarity, as the common people of the land. They became more conquered than the conquered themselves. When he once spoke in this strain, before a Muslim Society of Young Men at Nagpur, spell-bound, they forthwith made him an Honorary Member of their Society for life !

Bhulabhai is in the vanguard of Congress leadership as one of the greatest moulders of our national life during the last decade. Essentially a Moderate, he blossomed into an ardent Congressite but refused to become an extremist. He openly became a Congressman when Moderatism meant toadying and flunkeyism; and hesitated not to pay the worst penalties even at the risk of losing his life. Bhulabhais precede a revolution; they ennoble it with their names. But Vallabhbhais make it and follow in its wake. Indifferent to the art of self-advertisement, he is unlike some of his own juniors, known but not named, who loudly shout their smallest ailments like a cold. He does not cultivate a good press. Bhulabhai has been one of the three or four big bosses of the Congress, who has not yet ascended the Presidentship of the Congress. Gandhiji has not finished the run of the order; he would get his chance when others overdue have finished. The present writer would close this sketch with a passage from a letter from an eminent American who along with his wife toured the East and became the first American Minister to the Dominion of Canada. He is Mr. James H. R. Cromwell, the husband of Dorothy Duke, the heiress of the Duke millions, and one of the wealthiest heiresses of the world. Mr.

Cromwell wrote six years ago to the present writer from the Commander-in-Chief's House, New Delhi :—

“I met your friend Bhulabhai Desai and sat next to him at the luncheon of the Chamber of Commerce Convention. A more charming, cultivated and intelligent man I have never met. We had a long and interesting conversation on the subject of “Money” and discovered to our mutual pleasure that we shared almost identical views. I am glad I saw a side of Indian thought and patriotism which I found most admirable and has now led me to change my point of view very considerably.”





MAHATMA GANDHI



## MAHATMA GANDHI

**I**T was 6 p.m. Saturday evening when Mahatma Gandhi ascended the rostrum. The eyes and ears of the world were riveted on that scene of August 8, 1942 at the Gowalia Tank Maidan, Bombay. Nothing in the history of the All-India Congress Committee, not even a whole annual sessions of the Congress itself, had roused so much interest. Twenty years ago, the Congress went over officially to Non-cooperation with much less ado. Newspapermen, representative of every important news agency and newspaper of the world, except of the Axis lands, rushed there by rail, ship and plane. Members of the Fourth Estate had never gathered in such a crowd, conversing in every tongue. The auditorium was packed with men and women of every land and of all ages. Five and fifty years ago, the Indian National Congress held its first sessions at a place not fifty yards distant from this pandal, a piece of exquisite showmanship rendered by S. K. Patil, Bimal Sharma and their co-workers of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee. The eyes and ears of the world were fixed on the frail and sad figure clothed in mere loin cloth. Both the Allied and the Axis Nations were excited to know what he would say and how he would steer the proceedings; for he had uttered a historic phrase, sounded a call to arms, without possessing any, and administered a warning, broadcast to all the corners of the globe. His "Quit India" slogan was a bullet which reached the very heart of the ruling race. The wires of the world were fast clicking away as Jawaharlal had just spoken. He had raised expectancy to a feverish point and thus set the stage for the Mahatma. Delhi had ready, cut and dried plans to meet any emergency, to operate at a moment's notice.

Then began the most memorable speech ever delivered in the annals of Indian history. It was the charter of liberty, the quintessence of the philosophy of Non-Violence and

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

Truth, the final and unanswerable indictment of British rule in this country, the symbol of friendship with China, Russia and every oppressed people of the world, and a world of glorious encouragement to real and true friends all over the globe, who were ready to cherish friendships transcending barriers of race and isolation. It was a rousing call to the dormant soul of Hindustan and to every man and woman who cherished liberty.

The Mahatma recalled his friendship with the late Charlie Andrews and felt that his soul was communicating with him. Then he referred to his friendship with the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow; to the visit his daughter and her husband had paid him at the Ashram and how friendly the Viceroy had become with Mahadev Desai, who alas is no more! The Viceroy had even gone the length of showing Mahadev Desai his pets. How wise the Censor who had cut out the next morning all these references of utmost goodwill made by the uncrowned monarch of Hindustan towards the titular head of the administration and his family.

Then the Mahatma referred to his erratic eldest son who embraced Islam, and found fault with the converters for admitting such poor stuff as him in their ranks. He was a drunkard!

Madame Chiang Kai-Shek too was not left out of the picture.

"I have fallen in love with her and what a wise and faithful interpreter she was of her great husband. May she be of us also to her people!"

Mr. Jinnah claimed to be the leader of Muslims but his vanity would destroy him. However, he prayed that Jinnah may live a long life and survive the speaker. He had been misguided. He, the Mahatma, bore abounding love for his Muslim brethren. They had thrust lavish hospitality on him both in South Africa and India and many of his dearest friends were Muslims—Maulana Bari, Imam Sahib, Abbas Tyabji, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari.

Then rang out the peroration, solemn and stern:—

“I shall strain every nerve for peace. Let there be final peace between our countries. I will not be afraid to stand against the whole world for God is with me. I shall wage my lonely battle even if the whole of India forsakes me. Congress had committed no crime by demanding Complete Independence for the country. I have pledged my support to Congress and the Congress will do or die.”

Thus spoke the Mahatma and the world was startled the next morning to learn that he and all the Congress leaders were arrested. None expected this swift turn of events and the foreign journalists, who had heard the Mahatma with pin-drop silence immensely impressed with his tone of conciliation and friendship, were shocked to find that the olive branch was so brutally spurned. No blame could be attached to the Mahatma. A threat had been held out but no actual campaign launched; whatever happened was beyond his control. Before the word had been given the country was enveloped in a struggle, the like of which had not been waged in the history of British rule in this country.

The greatest prophet of Indian unrest, the reshaper of a nation's destiny had spoken. He had made India freer than he had found it. His was the voice that could make peace or war in this country. His voice of rebellion created the present mood and outlook of Indian nationalism. He alone commanded the following of millions who would repeat the jubilant cry of the guards of Caesar, about to march to the front:—“Hail Caesar! We who are about to die, salute thee!” Some dubbed Gandhi as the master of negation, obstruction and protest but he alone switched the thought of our modern politics into progressive channels, breathing the spirit of a bold and uncompromising leadership. If there had been no Gandhi, India would have wallowed in her “pathetic contentment,” with her discontent unfocussed and her movement for liberation taking no shape and purpose. Gandhi was the greatest maker of the East and



the only one in the world who had successfully organised a national revolution of turning the other cheek when one was outraged. He was the unrestrained arbiter of our political conscience, and a barometer of our national temper. His character had become a national possession and an endless topic for international discussion.

To Mahatma Gandhi belonged the eternal credit of having brought home to us with convincing force the shame of a conquered race. Faces, pathetic and forlorn, have yielded place to smiling men and women to whom the sound of laughter was more real than before. Wherever the Indian was found thither he carried his galling shame of a subject nation. That atmosphere the Mahatma subdued with his moral stature, covering up even our physical weaknesses. Our destinies were no more to be the sport and gambol of organised exploitation. A whole sub-continent stood transformed and transfigured under his leadership, with every continent wanting to know what he preached and practised. He exploded the myth of our perpetual helotry and preached us with stirring accents the creed of Swaraj. That Grand Old Man of our politics, Dadabhai Naoroji had defined Swaraj for us and what it meant to the teeming millions of this country; Romesh Chandra Dutt drew up the harrowing tale of our economic misery with his masterly and unchallenged statistics. Surendranath Bannerji, Lokmanya Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai poured forth their torrential oratory and made our flesh creep with the horrors of bondage. Chitta Ranjan Das with his ferocious sincerity and raging patriotism transformed us into bolder men than we were before. The Nehrus taught us how to thrust everything into the background when once the supreme call was sounded. But it was left to Mahatma Gandhi alone to make us feel equals of other men and wrest what was due to us from unfriendly and antagonistic hands. He has shown us that it is possible to combine lofty idealism with the most far reaching national ambitions, allied with a kind of tolerance which makes no

difference between the various pigmentations of the human skin. India freed and unrestricted will thus smash racial barriers and offer a new programme for suffering humanity.

When the Mahatma strode out to the beach of Dandi on that historic morning of March 12, 1930, an astonished world asked the question whether a pinch of salt could after all break the back of the mightiest Empire of history. Even the Mahatma's most sanguine followers were unable to see into the future. Fortified with the thrills of his previous campaigns, they were simply beckoned to follow him on with abundant faith in the sovereign justice of his cause. But since the withdrawal at Bardoli, he had contemplated for a decade the conception and the execution of the Grand March in all its spectacular and baffling details. He was the inspiration, the brains and the motive force of the momentous storm that swept over all the Orient. He was unaided by armies and navies, and the destructive pomp and power that they carried in their train. A little, frail, half-naked man, living on fruits, nuts and goat's milk sat down cross-legged to parley with the potentates of the once formidable British Empire.

Fame poured into his lap from every nook and corner of the civilised world; but he was unchanged by it all. Wherever he went, the limelight followed him and his name was on the lips of every human being inhabiting the globe. Gandhi was the best advertised man of the day. Morley touring America in the earliest part of the century burst out, "Well, I have seen two wonders in America, Roosevelt and Niagara." The poor Indian villager may not have heard of the Taj though the monument has graced his country for hundreds of years; but the name of Gandhi has more than once gripped his heart and mind. Gandhi's thoughts, let alone his acts, are "news" worth considerable space in the press of the world. Pictures, biographies and his immortal autobiography come tumbling over one another in reckless confusion. Humanity delights in the Mahatma's pranks

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

without failing to be inspired by his lofty idealism. He is a curious mixture, so unattractive, so unworldly, yet so matchless with his toothless smile, so childlike in his simplicity and attractive even in the skin he wears on his ageing body, so human and adorable! His toothless smile can turn a brickbat into a bouquet. He talks with the lid off the innermost things of the heart, without tricks and without any rhetoric. He uses plain and unvarnished language that would have been the delight of the illustrious writers of the New Testament. He has an unmatched genius for enveloping himself in an atmosphere of cold and rigid detachment. He may declare that he is out of the Congress but the Congress simply cannot do without him. Congress is what Gandhi makes it and the political barometer of India is at Wardha, for once even the Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow was forced to admit this to Louis Fischer of the American *Nation*. Gandhi can remain silent whilst others talk endlessly; firm whilst others waver and in the end manage to impose his will on everybody by the sheer weight of his own personality. His silence is more potent than the speeches of other men. He can clinch great issues with one single phrase. When Katherine Mayo, an American tourist slandered Hindustan, he condemned her book *Mother India* with the observation that it was a "*Drain Inspectress' Report*." When people spilt ink over Dominion Status and constitutional pandits toyed with Independence, he cried out, "I'll be satisfied with *the substance of Independence*." He packed off Sir Stafford Cripps, bag and baggage out of the country with his typical comment on the British War Cabinet's proposals, "Why do you give us a *post-dated cheque*?" It was Jam Saheb of Nawanagar who unkindly added some more words to the actual declaration of the Mahatma by saying "on a crashing bank."

Face to face with great issues, he breathes the air of supreme moral greatness that is altogether rare in the world today. His moral support to any great cause is worth more

than the might of divisions and battleships. He has the frailty of a man but the security of a demi-god in him. *"For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, his name is great among the nations of the world."* There is no one alive in the same planetary system with him. He has neither changed a principle nor been false to one. He has often lost and even been on the wrong side; but he has never thrown in his lot on the side of wrong. We owe him a debt of gratitude unfathomable, for spiritualising politics. He is a spiritual and political leader of masses of humanity who wins the race by first winning victory over himself. His contribution to the thought of the world is distinct and ennobling. Nothing can shake his determination in the efficacy of spiritual methods. Love which elevates man and not violence and hate which degrades him to the level of a beast is the emblem of his creed. Lenin and Gandhi, who it is said, were found to read together in the British Museum, without their knowing each other in their youthful days, carved out different careers for themselves. Their path lay in different spheres though Tolstoy created the background for both of them.

Gandhiji seeks not to establish an empire of the world but a world-wide empire within the heart so as to attain a speedy solution of our distressing wrongs. The World War I showed that every canon of morality was torn to shreds by the victors in the name of virtue and public good. No lie was considered too foul to be uttered. The motive beneath every crime was grossly materialistic. It was the hideous worship of Mammon that drew the Christian powers of Europe into the fatal process of strangulation which ended in the World War II. The stern rebuke to a Christian world, divided and pitched against itself, is contained in Gandhiji's golden message:—

"True I am not a Christian ! But there is more love and adoration in my heart for Christ than there is in the hearts of those who audaciously, loudly and unblushingly

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

proclaim themselves His followers. May you and your Church glorify God by serving Christ !”

Gandhi is both an iconoclast and idol worshipper. His statement is baffling and inconsistent; yet that is his sovereign faith. His veneration for all faiths, pleased the ear and silenced the critics.

“What I have said repeatedly is that I am an iconoclast as well as an idol worshipper. That is rather different from saying that I have no faith in idol worship, but it would be perfectly true if anybody said it of me that I very rarely visited the temples . . . My faith is broad enough to inspire me with veneration whether my visit is to a Hindu temple, to a mosque, or a church, or a synagogue. I have visited all these, never as a scoffer or a critic but always out of veneration . . .

. . . Most religious men I have met are politicians in disguise. I, however, who wear the guise of a politician, am at heart a religious man. My religion is my politics.”

With the same yardstick he measured the Englishman and his dominion in India:

“You belong to a system that is vile beyond description . . . I give you the whole of my motive when I tell you that I am impatient to end or mend a system, which has made India subservient to a handful of you and which has made Englishmen feel secure only in the shadow of the forts and the guns that obtrude themselves on one’s notice in India. It is a degrading spectacle for you and us . . . A system that is responsible for such a state is necessarily satanic . . .

. . . We want to demonstrate by our conduct that the Englishman is as safe in the remotest corner of India, as he proposes to be behind his machine guns. That moment will see a transformation in the English nature in its relation to India and that moment will also be the moment when all the destructive cutlery in India will begin to rust. . . .

I almost feel tempted to invite you to join me in destroying a system that has dragged both you and us down. But I feel I cannot yet do so. We have not shown our-

## MAHATMA GANDHI

selves earnest, self-sacrificing and self-restrained enough for that consummation."

This was what he wrote in 1921 and time has marched on with strength on one side and no moral elevation of sacrifice on the other! He was the same man who as he said put his life four times in peril for the sake of the British Empire. Whenever occasions arose, he spoke with the accent of truth and told the authorities, both British and Indian on bended knees, the plain truth. He demanded that plain justice be meted out to his countrymen and in return he was ready to submit himself not only to any impartial tribunal but also at the bar of posterity. With humility and dignity, using Chatham's language, he would preface his statement that "it was now necessary to instruct the throne in the language of truth."

Whenever he cries, he cries forth aloud the woes of his countrymen. "I shall not die and my prayer must reach the throne of the Almighty." He showed that of all the world's public personages he alone laid his soul bare. All the fleeting public personages would draw a screen between their private and public lives. The world worships the dollar and the pound, if not guns, ships and planes; but the Mahatma will not miss his morning and evening prayers for anything in the world. Even if the mightiest police force were to throw a cordon around him with high powered automobiles ready to convey him to distant jails, they must await his pleasure of finishing his morning prayers. Then only could they lay their unholy hands on him!

His autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* contains the frankest confessions of a great soul. It is unlike the biographies of the builders of other nations. The life portrayed in them is unlike Mustafa Kemal's fiery epic dominated by the cold resolve of a man convinced of his destiny as the moulder of a nation and unscrupulous in the fulfilment of his ordained task. Gandhiji's life is magnificently simple and ordinary. It is a life that can be lived

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

by other world's mortals. His autobiography mercilessly exposes all the glaring weaknesses of his past life, his most intimate relations with his wife, of his quarrels and carnal desires and every human detail which the majority of mankind would never have laid open for public gaze. Many times in his life he must have felt the strength of the perennial truth that the strongest man in the world is he who stands alone.

The root cause of all trouble has been that humanity has hitherto tolerated two sets of moral values, one for the individual and another for the group or nation, with almost disastrous results. We get a rude shock when we hear of an individual murder; and we hang the murderer from the nearest and tallest tree! When there is murder on a vast scale, on an international scale, when whole nations may be wiped off for sheer profit, gold, silver and markets, we resort to another set of judgments and our values change. An individual may be called upon and in fact is expected to sacrifice for his neighbour; but in the large order of things it is different. Nations are not expected to offer sacrifice. The great individuals who are the rulers will use a different language to conceal their real intentions. Gandhiji wants mankind to live far from blood and cries and swords.

We have different sets of values and different sets of men. As long as values vary with varying climates and circumstances, there is no hope for mankind. This dual morality must go. There must be only one morality for all peoples and all nations. Why should States, guilty of the rape of undeveloped, coloured, maiden nations (though the latter may be clothed in veritable darkness), be allowed to go scot free? However they are proclaimed as great civilising nations and thus hypocrisy runs rampant in the history of civilisation.

Taking our own case, our people individually are perhaps the cleanest people. But collectively we are not en-

## MAHATMA GANDHI

titled to the same praise. Our men and women insist on their daily bath. Their pots and pans are ever shining spotless and free from any stain. Withal we are not a clean people. Our persons, utensils, homes may be clean; but what of our streets and by-lanes. Gandhiji's admonishing voice has not left this part of our life untouched.

So also in regard to the treatment of the untouchables. The Mahatma held forth that we had no right to condemn the foreigner when we had a mass of untouchables amidst us.

Gandhi strove to set this right, by imposing only one set of values; elevating only one seat of judgment whether it was for the brown, black, white or yellow man. Even if it be one from his own inner circle, he will not fail to reprove him. He would go the length of a hunger-strike for his neighbour's reparation. In 1933 Mahatma Gandhi went on a fast just because one of his close associates had confessed to him that he had broken certain jail rules. The rules were broken when the present writer was the jail companion of that particular Satyagrahi and they were absolutely harmless violations of the Jail Manual. Yet the Mahatma was in no mood to condone them.

The Mahatma strongly holds that there is no salvation for mankind from the horrors and ills of War unless and until one set of moral principles is enforced from China to Peru. Whatever guides individual life must regulate inter-group relations. The East is now aping the West in the more advanced forms of destruction. The West has now carried the sword to the East not that the East was in any way less violent before; but the more scientific weapons of destruction have come out from the West when whole populations have been totally destroyed by fire. Mahatma Gandhi showed us the way. If the conduct of man, whether it be of individuals or nations, be judged by one standard, then there would be a revolutionary change for the good in the world.



The Mahatma is the seeker after Truth and is ever experimenting. Only truth and non-violence are immutable and final to him. They could never change but the experiments went on changing. If it is possible for Hitler to drill a whole nation into the so-called righteousness of the Reich, and we have seen it all in our own life time, then it is possible to train up nations in the knowledge of what is right and wrong. A change like this could be effected within the space of 30 years all the world over if the leaders of nations, of the Haves and Have-nots, began thinking and act on these lines. Will they do it?

It is of no avail to be of Abraham's stock! Christ and Christendom cannot recognize privileged races! But how many Christians speak and recognize this great truth and practise it. The Mahatma's non-violence started almost from the day when he was a victim of colour prejudice. No doubt injustice and wrong have been resisted throughout the ages. The spirit of passive resistance is as old as the hills but that it should have been practised on the most extensive scale known to history goes to the credit of the Mahatma. Christ had preached it and the Mahatma himself hailed him as the Prince of Satyagrahis. It became almost a sort of startling technique under the Mahatma's direction.

Brailsford gave the credit to Mahatma Gandhi when he wrote:—

“Against the drift of western teaching and example, Gandhi has demonstrated to the world this Christian ethic both in himself and through his millions of followers, when they were beset with their pressing problems.”

The immediate cause of the Mahatma's experimenting with his Satyagraha weapon was when he had the painful experience of being a victim of racial prejudice in South Africa. It was during his career as a lawyer there that he had his first taste of that social ostracism which no Christian or any decent human being could tolerate. It led to his *Ahimsa*. It happened on his return from England where he

'had qualified' himself as a Barrister and just seven days after he had reached South Africa. Let us quote his own words:—

"I was just a boy returned from England, wanting to make some money. Suddenly, the client who had taken me there asked me to go to Pretoria from Durban. It was not an easy journey. There was the railway journey as far as Charlestown and the coach to Johannesburg. On the train I had a first-class ticket, but not a bed ticket. At Maritzburg when the beds were issued, the guard came and turned me out, and asked me to go into the van compartment. I would not go, and the train steamed away leaving me shivering in the cold. Now the creative experience comes there. I was afraid for my very life. I entered the dark waiting room. There was a white man in the room. I was afraid of him. What was my duty? I asked myself. Should I go back to India, or should I go forward with God as my helper, and face whatever was in store for me? I decided to stay and suffer. My active non-violence began from that date."

Needless to say that the Mahatma has long ago forgiven the offenders, but the world should not forget the historic commencement of the fight of non-violence!

This is an age of diplomacy, violence and war. Gandhi's doctrine of Satyagraha which is a positive weapon of work, organisation, struggle and resistance strives to replace these antiquated and destructive weapons. Gandhi discovered a moral equivalent for war. He organised that equivalent and gave it voice and strength. The true Satyagrahi should bear no ill-will! He should not paint the enemy in black colours! He should credit the enemy with common humanity! Gandhi thus made a deliberate effort to apply Christian principles to our political situation and the Christian rulers counter-attacked with un-Christian methods! The real conflict today is not between nations and peoples. It is between principles; it is between violence and non-violence. It is certainly not between England and India at present; it is between the two systems. Hence

the Mahatma insisted on love as the basis of his weapon. There was to be no place for revenge or vindictiveness in that system. Sarcasm, imputations of unworthy motives, even temptation to retaliate, either by word or deed, social boycott all these were to be avoided to make the doctrine of Satyagraha effective. Gandhiji just reiterated though perhaps he was a solitary figure on the world stage, what was already decreed in the Bible :—

“Pray also for Kings and powers and princes and for them that persecute and hate you and for the enemies of the Cross that your fruit may be manifest among all men that ye may be perfect in Him.”

These are the methods of peace, concord and love. They are not mere empty words that have been successfully or unsuccessfully translated into action by the Mahatma. He was out to crucify humanity on his cross of Non-Violence. No one can now foretell the results. It may be old wine in new bottles, but it never tasted better than now. Gandhi's methods have inflicted the least physical suffering both on the opponents as well as his own adherents. The orphan's and the widow's wail was comparatively rare; in fact none at all till 1941. The loss to the enemy and the victim was negligible. But the moral loss on the one side and the increase in moral prestige on the other have been immense. The weapon of Satyagraha has definitely meant the loss of morale for the opponent and more sympathy from neutrals. Passion, anger and hatred being absent from the Satyagrahi, he disarms his opponent. The opponent is positively baffled and inch by inch he surrenders. Otherwise was it ever possible to achieve any degree of success by the repeated attempts of mass agitation, the experiments of 1920, 1930-31, 1932-33 and 1940? Not all of them were successful; but they resulted in more strength for us, more power of resistance and a great awakening. It was no easy job to rouse consciousness of a people divided from corner to corner and torn by baffling distinctions. Centuries of slavery had killed the very soul of the nation. We had lost capacity for even a

## MAHATMA GANDHI

violent resistance. Every experiment, therefore, meant renewal of strength and a steady advance towards the goal. Could any one guarantee the success of an armed insurrection? There would be skirmishes, reverses, battles, sieges and ambushes! What if victory was achieved? Even after victory, the fruits of victory are sometimes more dangerous than the pains of defeat. The fate of France is a tragic example. Violence breeds violence and it can never have an end. You have not only to create arms but keep them for keeping peace! What a paradoxical situation. You pile up armaments to enforce disarmament.

Before 1939, Bolshevik Russia having destroyed its real or supposed enemies abroad, turned its fangs inwards, and destroyed its own children. In fact, legalised murder swept off the creators and fathers of the revolution, one by one. They said they wiped off Fifth-Columnism! However, Communism accentuates differences and destroys points of common interest. With conflict intensified, with all common objectives disappearing in the pursuit of making everything common, the craze was maddening.

There is a revealing incident in the book of Rev. Dr. Leonard M. Schiff *The Present Condition of India*. He narrates an incident in regard to the Civil Disobedience Campaign when it was at its highest pitch. Commenting on the effect the teachings of *Ahimsa* had on one of the fighting races he says:—

“There were the Akali Sikhs, tall warriors with swords, but pledged to non-violence. They were determined not to surrender their flag. Down came the lathi on their heads with a sickening thud; they fell. Others took their place. At last the inner circle of their women-folk alone remained, but this was too much for the police; they kept their flag.”

This was not an isolated incident. There were hundreds of such incidents all over the country, including several in our own City of Bombay. Who can forget how the officers of

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

the Bombay City Police conducted themselves in 1930-32 movements? Had not so many Sergeants beaten down people mercilessly? Yet when the Congress Government came in Bombay they were not in the least nervous about it for no ideas of revenge or vindictiveness were entertained. The Police were loyal servants of the Congress Government. They felt secure in the spirit of Mahatma's non-violence, love and truth. There was no place for revenge or vindictiveness in the Mahatma's creed

There is the most important point of Mahatma's philosophy in regard to means and ends. In regard to objectives, his mind was clear. As regards the end he had definitely made up his mind, that he would not taint the means to achieve the end. He would care a jot for Indian Independence if it was going to be secured by violence. Hence for him the means were as important as the end itself. Therein lay the explanation of the individual Satyagraha campaign which he launched in 1940. He would not ride into emancipation on the ruins of St. Paul's and the Houses of Parliament. He also corrected the mistakes of the past. He banned secrecy which struck at the root of Individual Satyagraha. He would not fill the jails by the thousands, though there was every possibility of the movement developing on a mass scale if he had been clapped behind bars. Questionable means did not worry several leaders of great revolutions of the world. Perhaps the Mahatma has been the only one who has led a great nation, insisting on the means he adopts.

One vital aspect of the Mahatma's work should not be overlooked. Speaking at the Round Table Conference at London he declared for :

**"the complete freedom from alien yoke in every sense of the term and this for the sake of the dumb millions; every interest, therefore, that is hostile to these interests must be revised or altered most substantially if it is not capable of revision."**

## MAHATMA GANDHI

Therein is the key of the Mahatma's philosophy in regard to the poverty-stricken millions of India. He identified the cause of India with the dumb millions and adopted the loin cloth to mark his complete identification with their state of life. If the abject lot of the dumb millions was improved he would be satisfied and live to see the attainment of material and spiritual salvation of a vast portion of humankind.

One cannot understand Gandhi's work without realising his intimate connection with the masses. Gandhi walked into the social and political fields through the villages, and he has launched every great experiment with an eye on the villages. What he has accomplished for the poor of Hindustan during his life time has not been done by generations of missionaries of all denominations as well as by the cumulative efforts of all the past and present leaders.

To sum up the Mahatma's philosophy in the words of Acharya Kripalani, one of the shrewdest authorities on Gandhism and a member of the old Gandhian guard :—

“Gandhi never claims finality for his notions. He styles his activities as search for or experiments with truth. These experiments are being made. Some of his followers no doubt claim finality for his notions. But he himself makes no such claim. He admits mistakes and tries to rectify them. Only for two of his cardinal principles, truth and non-violence, does he claim any sort of infallibility. For the rest he is as willing to learn as he is to teach what he considers to be the truth as he sees it. Even as regards the two cardinal principles in their application there is no rigidity. He freely admits that they may be applied differently in different circumstances and situations. It is this attitude of his that often puzzles his followers and others and makes any forecast of how he will act under a particular set of circumstances rather difficult. Being a growing and evolving personality there can be no final and fixed modes of thought and action for him. When many of his young followers grow static and lose their vitality, he is ever

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

dynamic, active and full of vigour. He is ever understanding in patience and examines new propositions with an open and comparatively unbiased mind. There is, therefore, as yet no such thing as Gandhism but only a Gandhian way and appeal which is neither rigid nor formal nor final. As usual the practice of the doctrine comes first and the name and theory afterwards . . . . Gandhi is no philosopher . . . He has created no new system. He has from the beginning been a practical reformer. As such he deals and writes upon problems as they arise. *He is pre-eminently a man of action* and, therefore, it is not possible to find in his speeches and writings and actions any original or philosophical system."

We shall not say anything about the present movement; judgment will be delivered at the end of it. But suffice it to say that the intensity, strength and force engendered by it hitherto, after its commencement on August 9, 1942 is greater than the aggregate force of all the conflicts waged against British authority since the days of the Indian Mutiny.

This is the fifth major conflict in which the Mahatma has been involved with British Imperialism. He has several minor triumphs to his credit. The first one of the Non-Co-operation Movement may have failed; but it spread its net far and wide and effected the preparatory stage essential for the final objective. The Bardoli decision to withdraw the Non-Co-operation Movement was a great blow. When the stage was set and the forces arrayed in battle line, the "General" called off the movement in 1922. It nearly took eight years for the Mahatma to launch his next offensive and his voice was stilled during that period. It was an act of self-inflicted ostracism until the march to Dandi. When the Mahatma started on his famous trek, his injunctions to his chosen eighteen followers were in the strain of those sacred ones administered by Jesus to his twelve disciples that :—

"They should take nothing for the way; but a staff only; no scrip, no bread, nor money in their purse, but

to be shod with sandals and that they should not put on two coats."

Wearing his loin cloth and staff in hand, Gandhi covered one hundred and seventy-five miles on foot within a fortnight. All the world followed his footsteps. Doubting Thomases and jeering opponents were later staggered with the revelation of the strength of the movement. Lord Irwin, now Viscount Halifax, who was then the Viceroy of India, and the Mahatma agreed upon a truce. The ex-Viceroy played the role of a philosopher king and since the days of the late Marquis Ripon, no Indian Viceroy made knowledge and vision the real support of his actions. Gandhi and Irwin alone could have attained the true frame of mind for self-sacrifice and forgiveness. When Lord Irwin asked his original draft of offer of the conditions of truce made on the 22nd February 1931 to be returned to him, the Mahatma like a true gentleman that he was, returned it forthwith, with the result that the Congress archives were deprived of even a copy of the draft. The Gandhi-Irwin Truce was a great achievement of constructive statemanship. It was gall and wormwood for Winston Churchill to note :—

"the nauseating and humiliating spectacle of this one time Inner Temple Lawyer, now a seditious fakir, striding half naked up the steps of the Viceroy's palace, there to negotiate and parley on equal terms with the representative of their King Emperor."

Yet it was the very same Churchill's Government that within the space of a decade sent out Sir Stafford Cripps to negotiate with the Congress and the Mahatma's decision scotched the proposals.

After the Gandhi-Irwin Truce was signed and the Mahatma was delegated as the sole Congress representative to go to the Round Table Conference at London, difficulties were put in his way. Yet like the true Satyagrahi that he was, he overcame evil with good and penned his



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

famous letter to the late Lord Willingdon, the successor to Lord Irwin in the Viceroyalty of India :

“The feeling is growing upon me that the great Civilians in India do not want me to go to England. If England and India are to live peacefully in lasting partnership, I feel that some of these Civilians must continue to serve India for sometime and, therefore, it is no use my going to London without their whole-hearted co-operation.”

When he was at the R.T.C. an anti-Congress conspiracy was hatched and the stage set for wrecking the Congress. Irwinism was dead and Willingdon created the peace of the desert. He took Mirabeau's warning literally :—“Be-ware of asking for time ! Disaster never gives it.” The Mahatma returned from the R.T.C. empty-handed ! Bombay gave him an unparalled welcome but his beloved Jawaharlal and most valued Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, with Sherwani and Tandon, were all in jail. Gandhi looked resolute, with the grave bearing of one who had arrived at a great decision. He was the man who could conciliate or subdue, and he failed to conciliate. The country was in the throes of another struggle bigger than that of 1930-31. Lakhs of men and women courted imprisonment in the two movements of 1930-31 and 1932-33. Penalties, confiscations, firings and lathi charges galore characterised the conduct of the bureaucracy.

Since the time the Yeravda Jail gates were flung wide open in February 1931 till the time the famous Truce was signed and then again till 4th January 1932 when a batch of Bombay C.I.D. officers escorted him back to the same prison, after his heroic fight at the Round Table Conference, Gandhi led the most strenuous life a politician could ever lead. All his prodigious activities he accomplished with regularity and precision, unexampled in history. During this time he asked for advice and tendered it as well. He beseeched, prayed, hoped and despaired. He was justifiably conscious that numberless men and women and even

## MAHATMA GANDHI

children, spread like myriad ants on the surface of the globe, put "child-like faith in his wisdom." A single *faux pas* would have annihilated the work of a life time. "The fierce wear and tear of such an existence," as Carlyle has written about another great figure of the French Revolution, had not upset the Mahatma; in fact, it normalised his existence. His was a life of hurricane activity, moving, whirling, hurrying, going and vanishing away into a jail! History was made during these hundred crowded hours of freedom he enjoyed in Bombay in January 1932 after his dash from London.

Then came his world thrilling fast unto death inside Yeravda Jail in September 1932. He wrote to the late Ramsay MacDonald intimating his Government about the fast :—

"My cry will rise to the throne of the Almighty . . . I'll make a super-human effort to quicken the Hindu conscience and awaken the conscience of the British Government."

To look down upon the untouchable and exclude him from all possible human touch was to Gandhi to borrow a Miltonian metaphor "to kill the image of God, as it were, in the eye." The idea of granting special electorates to the Depressed Classes was to him to roll the fate of the Hindu community backward. He threw a bombshell on every section, the British Government, the Indian bureaucracy, the Hindu community and the Congress in general though it was in jail, when he declared his intention to starve unto death and thus annul the act of Hindu vivisection and disintegration. A shock it was to everyone, "a shock is God's way of telling us to put our country straight."

"I am not a born untouchable but have been for the last fifty years an untouchable by choice," the Mahatma declared in *his first press interview in jail* a privilege never yet granted in the history of British administration to any one in any of their Dominions or territories. Such a thing

has never happened even in England or for that matter in any country of the world, wherein a Government's prisoner was permitted to give press interviews. It was Gandhi who like Socrates of old by becoming a prisoner effaced all infamy attached to prisons. He made a prison a place of pilgrimage to all freedom-loving Indians and had India long ago familiarised to Thoreau's dictum that under an unjust Government, all self-respecting citizens could not live except in jail.

The intense optimist in him leaped out when he observed that water gives infinite life. He threw a challenge to the British Government when he concluded his letter :—

“I have to resist your decision with my life . . . . It may be that my judgment is warped and that I am wholly in error in regarding separate electorates for ‘depressed classes’ as harmful to them or to Hinduism. If so, I am not likely to be in the right with reference to other parts of my philosophy of life. In that case my death will be at once a penance for my error and lifting on a weight from off those numberless men and women who have child-like faith in my wisdom. Whereas if my judgment is right as I have little doubt it is, the contemplated step is due to fulfilment of the scheme of life which I have tried for more than a quarter of a century apparently not without considerable success.”

Like Napoleon, the Mahatma won his battle in his head, before he could win it on the field !

Ancient history affords a similar parallel of sacrifice. Lycurgus, the founder of the renowned Hellenic state of Sparta, whose laws were observed for centuries, after going down to consult the Delphic oracle and being assured about the beauty of the system of his laws,

“took affectionate farewell of his friends and of his son . . . and decided of his own accord to put an end to his life where he was. He had reached an age in which life was not yet a burden, and death no longer a terror; . . . he, therefore, abstained from food till he died, considering that even the death of a statesman should be of

## MAHATMA GANDHI

service to the State, and the ending of his life not void of effect, but recognized as a virtuous deed. As for himself, since he had wrought out fully the noblest tasks, the end of life would actually be a consummation of his good fortune and happiness; and as for his fellow citizens, he would make his death the guardian as it were of all the blessings he had secured for them during his life, since they had sworn to observe and maintain his policy until he should return."

The Mahatma triumphed and then conducted an intensive campaign for the removal of untouchability both from inside and afterwards from outside the jail, when he was released. The 1932-33 Civil Disobedience campaign assaulted government prestige very severely and though no victory marked its end, the harvest was soon to be gathered in rich abundance.

Lord Willingdon meant to outlaw the Congress and the British Government devised the Government of India Act of 1935 with heavy safeguards and liabilities. The Congress declared its intentions to enter the legislatures and wreck the constitution from within. The Congress swept the polls and the avalanche of Congress victories could only be explained by the background of the previous campaign. Gandhiji again interfered and it was not until he gave the word that Congress accepted office in seven out of eleven provinces. It was the brightest chapter in the history of the Congress when its men and women demonstrated that they could run the Government of the country more efficiently than it was run at any time under the British. The Mahatma remained the watch-dog of the Congress ministries with his admonishing voice speaking out whenever occasion demanded it. For over two years Congress Ministries functioned and turned out a great deal of public work, vitalising every department of provincial activity in a manner never tackled by the British and their *proteges*. Its sovereign feature was that anyone having a real grievance would be heard and heard effectively, even though he lived

in the remotest village and it meant riding rough-shod over some petty or high placed bureaucrat.

During this time the Mahatma entered into the Rajkot Darbar Satyagraha scene and went on his fast. Reactionaries trumpeted that he suffered a set back in his struggle with the State authorities. The latter were backed by hostile bureaucrats and antiquated princes. However it is difficult for the orthodox and superstitious to get over the fact that everyone who was hostile to the Mahatma there, the ruler and his chief adviser, the Raja of Rajkot and Darbar Viravalla, died almost within twelve months after the Mahatma walked away from the scene.

Then Britain declared war on Germany and the international scene swiftly changed. The Viceroy made his declaration which was bitterly disappointing. The Mahatma who was responsible for installing Congress Ministers in power called them out and thus a resplendent chapter in the history of the Indian National Congress closed.

Parleys between Wardha and the Viceregal House were of no avail. The Mahatma felt that his non-embarrassment policy towards the British in the midst of their own peril was grossly exploited by them as they had simultaneously launched repression and jailed such excellent and noble patriots as Jaiprakash Narain and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia. Thereupon was launched his Individual Satyagraha campaign when Gandhiji had to choose and approve of every one of the candidates who courted imprisonment. About a year after, a sort of truce was drawn up when all the Satyagrahis were released. The Individual Satyagraha campaign more than proved that India lodged a grand, solemn and dignified protest against the use of men and resources from Hindustan in a war, to which the sanction of the country had not been given and it had been dragged into it against its express will. The Cripps Mission and the happenings of August 1942 and subsequent events are too fresh in everybody's memory. History will pass its own verdict.

## MAHATMA GANDHI

The Mahatma's life and work offered a kind of total leadership unexampled in the history of the world. One can search in vain in the annals of world leadership for anyone like the Mahatma who has revolutionised the life and thought of so many millions in the religious, social, economic and political spheres. He has been slow to adopt new theories and ideas; but once he has made them his own, he has invested them with his crusading and infectious zeal. He was slow to advocate the ideas of Independence and Constituent Assembly. But once they formed part and parcel of the Congress policy, he put in a commendable spirit of enthusiasm to popularise them. His Khaddar programme and the importance he attached to the revival of all village industries breathed altogether a new life in the illimitable village and hunger-ridden portion of Hindustan. He brought new life and hope to millions of poor homes where weaving and spinning were a sort of family tradition. If anyone can take credit for popularising the national language and robbing English of its importance, it is Gandhiji. He gave us a national weapon, the potency of which will be realised by the future generations when Hindustani will become universal in the land. Yet the Mahatma remains one of the finest masters of English prose, with a command of the appropriate phrase and idiom, unattained by anyone of his race. His Wardha scheme of education was a revolutionary step in our educational system, the importance of which can be realised only as time marches on.

There is no department of private or public life which the Mahatma has left untouched by his all-pervading influence. He is a master of dietetics and can prescribe you a wholesome course of diet for plain living and high thinking, of which he is the classic example. Goat's milk and dried fruit and the continual scourges of fasting have definitely increased his longevity which has been threatened only by attacks of blood pressure. In regard to health, the Mahatma is his own doctor and can usefully prescribe to

you his own treatment. One of the Mahatma's followers in the Visapur Jail, whilst serving a term of imprisonment there in 1940, transformed his grey hair into jet black glossy hair by continually keeping a wet mud poultice on his head for a few weeks.

The Mahatma knows how to value people and bind them to his heart with hooks of steel. There is something intensely personal about all his actions and speeches. He introduced the personal touch in our political life and changed the face of things. He knows quite a lot about men and the uses of men. No one in the history of Hindustan has successfully brought to bear such an intimate touch in the affairs of men of every class and community; none of course throughout the pages of Indian history has ever commanded his following. The Mahatma has a way of his own and he knows how to use masses of men and also how to handle a multitude of individuals. They could not escape his skilful but very human touch. An exalted personage in the country, nay a Viceroy would not have anything to do with the Mahatma, for he could not trust himself as to how he would come out after an interview with him; with the result that he forbade even others going to him. The Mahatma uses no tricks or jugglery to increase his personal influence but he has a way of going about things and utilising men that leaves the impress of his personality for all time on their minds. You can even take liberties with the Mahatma and still enjoy his confidence and bask in the sunshine of his humour, for which he is universally famed. The Mahatma will take you in like a hen which attracts her chickens. There is an abiding, refining and ennobling influence which he spreads round everywhere. You cannot take liberties with Jawaharlal. You may have known him for years but you may run away from him being awed with his lofty and cold attitude, with which he sometimes envelops himself. People even mistake it for haughtiness and impatience. Jawaharlal once wrote to the present writer:—"I am sorry I missed you in Bombay.

I had hoped to see you but you managed to elude me." Yet the writer was nervous when he actually met the Pandit despite the honour of the cordial invitation conferred on him. But not so the Mahatma; you may be an utter stranger to him. His toothless smile and air of utter humility puts you at ease. You will feel like pouring out your whole heart to him. He will thus win you outright and make you want to meet him always. The Mahatma introduced some striking and unforgettable touches in his correspondence which have made people treasure his letters as he writes them all by hand and no typewriter please! The present writer was the happy recipient of a note from him which stated :—

"I wonder whether you know I tried to meet you in Yeravda Jail but you were transferred . . . I am writing this letter to you at 4 a.m., before the morning prayers."

It was the first time the writer knew after several months that Gandhiji wanted to see him whilst a prisoner at Yeravda.

The way the Mahatma can play with children is delightful. He can suffer the little ones to come to him by the hundred; for he deeply realizes the truth that finally only through them he could open the way to Swaraj.

The Mahatma's life and activity embraces the lives of all the greatest Indian patriots. He started his South African campaigns when Dadabhai Naoroji and Gokhale still thundered in the British Parliament and the Imperial Legislative Council respectively. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta shepherded him in Bombay and Gokhale god-fathered him in the country on his return from his passive resistance victories from South Africa. Lokmanya Tilak, whose death he exceedingly felt just at the time when he planned his Non-Co-operation movement, was his inspiration and guide. Annie Besant's crusading fervour for Indian Home Rule touched the Mahatma's heart. Then followed the galaxy of departed patriots, who served with him, fought his battles and kept faith with him. They include Deshbandhu Chitta



Ranjan Das, who overshadowed almost everyone except the Mahatma by the force of his colossal sacrifice and brilliant attainments, Hakim Ajmal Khan, the most eminent physician and patriot, Pandit Motilal Nehru, about whom we have written elsewhere, Dr. M. A. Ansari, who rendered magnificent services to the cause of Indian nationalism, J. M. Sen Gupta, the Bengali leader who died with a patriot's crown, devoted to the end to the noble causes he espoused, Vithalbhai Patel, the most distinguished president of the Indian Legislative Assembly and several others. Mahomed Ali and Shaikat Ali, the latter especially who often loved to declare that he was in the pocket of the Mahatma, Lala Lajpat Rai, who gallantly bared his chest to the police lathi charges when the unwanted Simon Commission arrived in Lahore and later died with the immortal declaration that *"every blow you aim at our chests is a blow at British Imperialism and one more nail in the coffin of the British Empire."* Srinivasa Aiyangar, who gave away freely and shot like a meteor into the political firmament—all these offered the Mahatma considerable devotion which proved that he commanded the homage of every man and woman of every race and community, at one time or the other during the course of their lives, though they may have steered their course differently afterwards. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the Nestor of our politics, and the unsullied champion of orthodoxy, whom the Mahatma delighted in calling a "Dharmatma," blazoned forth his own communal track, but times without number nobly bowed unto the Mahatma's mandates. The greatest of all this noble line of dissenters, sturdy and turbulent, patriotic, dynamic Subhas Chandra Bose though he differed and boldly proclaimed his own programme, once humbly declared from the Congress Presidential *gadi* that his reputation was not worth anything if he did not enjoy the confidence of the Mahatma.

Mahatma Gandhi has been like Ulysses of old; he has travelled a long way and sailed forth on many voyages, sur-

veying men and places of every clime. His life has witnessed frequent changes of British Administration both in England and in this country. Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman's Government must have been ruling England when the Mahatma first set out on his South African Satyagraha campaign. He is still going strong with Churchill in office. The late Lord Hardinge was the Viceroy of India at the other end when the Mahatma first dominated the South African scene. Then came the line of Lords, Chelmsford, Reading, Irwin and Willingdon and it is time that Lord Linlithgow departed from these shores. Yet the Mahatma is firmly on the nationalist saddle, firmer than ever, with his influence on his countrymen greater today than at any time in his career. Many a time pious hopes were expressed by several "disinterested" people that his influence was over and that the Mahatma's power was a myth of a bygone age. In spite of it all, he has reverted to his throne, after sudden periods of silence and self-effacement, with increased influence and with greater prestige than before. His personal influence may cease only with his death and that is a long way off! But his moral influence will survive for all time. He has witnessed the passing away of his companions, colleagues and opponents like leaves falling in an autumn gale. He is the last leaf on the tree that is destined to witness the wild blowing of many a wind and gale until fine weather sets in, in the country. Many unkind people have uncharitably wished that the Mahatma was not alive today and that one of his fasts should have removed him from the stage of life; but the pity of it is that the possible death of the Mahatma is the last thing the British will want to face in India and they will always want the Mahatma to live as long as possible! Has he not saved them from disaster on so many occasions? It is not, however, gratitude that prompts British Imperialism, but fear of the consequences of his death.

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

A time will come when our children's children will implore their forbears for enlightenment about the Mahatma, a scene so well pictured by the most popular French song writer of his day, Jean Pierre de Beranger, regarding the story of the conquering Emperor, in which grandchildren eagerly asked of old peasant women, "And did he once speak to you grandma?" Both Napoleon and Gandhi stand on opposite planes; one exalted by his bounding ambition and authority and the other elevated by his humility and love of truth. One is the figure of one of the greatest Europeans who held Europe under his conquering heel passed into "the beloved legendary hero," with his three-cornered hat and his long gray coat; the other is that of the greatest Oriental of all time almost deified and passed on as a national heritage, clad in a loin cloth and armed with a staff !



**SIR HENRY GIDNEY**



## SIR HENRY GIDNEY

"ONLY the new days are our own" remarked the late Sir Henry Gidney to the present writer; in that authoritative sentence, he gravely dug into the past and cheerfully looked out into the future ! That was the keynote of his pioneering policy, laid down for his fellow-men, whom he gallantly and faithfully served unto the end. No man is indispensable to his community; but Gidney was irreplaceable. His career started an epoch for his community and with his passing away, also passed an epoch, a milestone of his people's progress. They commenced another chapter, facing the new India of the future, with their love and fear, their hope and confidence. Gidney was worried about the succession to the leadership of his tiny community strewn throughout this vast land and he picked out one of the finest and ablest young men to lead the flock after his death. Frank Anthony showed great promise for the future, unspoilt as he was by the weaknesses of the past and moved by the new currents of thought. He delightfully hailed his motherland as "Mother India" and courageously exhorted his fellow-men to forget their past hope of "going home" to England!

Writing about "English Genius," an Englishman bred in military traditions fostered by Simla, Delhi and the North-West Frontier wrote :—

"The Englishman divides humanity into two classes, Englishmen and niggers, and of the second class some happen to be black and other white. He only condescends to differentiate between these sub-classes by calling the latter dagoes . . . . Having nothing to learn through sheer power of domination he has become the prince of rulers and through sheer refusal to be defeated by niggers, the master of improvisation."

Sweeping assertions have been made about racial purity and the defects of people of diverse parent stocks. Varying ethnic stocks do exist in every country and there is no biological foundation for such a thing as a pure race or a pure community. Leading anthropologists of the world support no such theory or racial creed. Frank Anthony spoke for his people in his very first public utterance after he filled in the gap created by Gidney's death that "these theories of racial purity and superiority were the stock-in-trade of ranting demagogues and fire-eating imperialists," striving to keep up a tottering structure. The Directors of the East India Company directly encouraged and even subsidized mixed marriages between British Officers and soldiers and Indian women. These romantic unions resulted in the Anglo-Indian community. Time was when this community enjoyed a commanding, influential and wealthy position but their rank thriftlessness and overbearing attitude led them into their present helpless plight, with double loyalties to Britain and India. The life of the Anglo-Indian of the past was motivated by two main considerations, their conscious hatred for the Indian and subconscious hatred for the European. Their hatred for the former was morally unjustifiable and their hatred of the latter quite understandable. Their loyalty to the British Government became a part of their culture and environment and their antipathy to things Indian was the direct offshoot of that policy.

The Englishwoman in India was the evil genius of this source of trouble. She bred club-snobbishness and flaunted the ideas of racial superiority. Her clubs ran rampant with their exclusiveness. She created a new kind of untouchability, more menacing and dangerous for peace and harmony amongst the different races and peoples inhabiting this part of the globe than the accursed type of untouchability, which already existed in this country through sheer force of habit, without any malice. The Anglo-Indians

had to show greater concern for the Europeans than against the Indians; their real enemies were the colour-ridden British and other Europeans. Amongst those enemies, the Englishwomen in India were fertile sources of trouble. The horrors of racial hatred in this country can be laid at their door. It was a leading European psychoanalyst who observed after a penetrating study of Indian social conditions:—"The majority of Englishwomen in India are simply not ladies; hence they are frequently overbearing and inconsiderate towards persons whom they deem to be their inferiors." Every up-country club is fertile in snobberies, dissimulations, prejudices, hatreds, envies. What is worse, a point stressed by Aldous Huxley in *Jesting Pilate* is, that behind the ludicrous antics of the snobberies, conventions and deceits of the club-members, lie the tragic implications of the reciprocal hatred of colours.

The original sin lay in the exaggerated opinion which the Englishman entertained about himself; George Bernard Shaw hit the nail on its head when he said in 1929:—"Of course, a great many Englishmen are under the impression that Egypt belongs to England. Similarly they are mostly under the impression that the whole earth belongs to this country." Henry Nevinston further analysed the causes:—

"We adopted for our English race all Jewish history, the Jewish Psalms, the prophecies and promises to the chosen people. We could not doubt that we were the chosen people ourselves and some attempted to trace our British pedigree to the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel. Every Sunday evening we sang old Simeon's 'Nunc Dimittis,' including the verse that Christ was to be a light to lighten the Gentiles and be Glory of Thy Peoples Israel. Who were the Gentiles but the Indians, Chinese, Negroes, Red Indians and other inferior peoples? And who were the people of Israel but ourselves!"



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

A few months before his death, Sir Henry Gidney unerringly put his finger on the festering spot of racial hatred :—

“One of the defects of British rule, particularly as far as India is concerned has been the attitude of the Britisher himself in thinking that he belongs to a divine and superior race and that those who are under that rule are his subjects and inferior to him, more so those in those countries, east of the Suez . . . The deeds of the Indian soldier on the battlefields of Egypt, Lybia, and Abyssinia are enough to open the eyes of even the ultra-sceptic and die-hard Britisher . . . There must be a complete stoppage of social snobbishness, of racial exclusiveness, of the feeling of master and servant based on colour prejudice; otherwise India will ever remain a huge Ulster in the Commonwealth of Nations . . . At a time when Englishwomen could not come out with the pioneer British traders and soldiers, the latter had, perforce, to establish contact with Indian families and assimilate ideas of the East . . . The Anglo-Indian community was the result of such contacts and would have proved a great boon to India if only that policy of the original traders were continued. But when it became possible for Englishwomen to come out to India, everything changed . . . . Kipling wrongly felt and versed, ‘Ne’er the twain shall meet,’ a belief rigidly and cruelly observed and practised by some Englishmen, especially by commercial firms in India. It is the majority of Englishwomen, who by this attitude of aloofness, help to keep up the superiority complex and are largely the cause of the racial ill-feeling and social segregation with which India is to-day infected and cursed . . . . The Englishman is known for his reserved manners and his unwillingness to make friends if he can help it. When travelling in a railway carriage he prefers to keep on reading even a most uninteresting novel or a stale newspaper rather than speak to a fellow passenger . . . Even some of the swimming clubs demand an examination of one’s skin lest the coloured swimmer shed his or her pigment and discolour the water where the white person bathes. The social life of India reeks with this snobbishness of the Britisher and we aver that many of the ills of Indian politics can largely be attri-

buted to this British prejudice that the Englishman is a superior being and that nothing good can possibly be grown or bred in the East . . . During the past decade we have with pleasure noted the change that has come over many an Englishman in his relations with Indians but we much regret to add that very little improvement has been registered in the attitude of Englishwomen. We feel that Englishwomen, with marked exceptions, have utterly failed, though golden opportunities lay within their grasp to play their part in the social evolution and improvement of the land in which their husbands live and earn their livelihood . . . The world has changed and so has India; but not so the Englishwoman, but the new India will on no account tolerate any further patronising attitude, the racial pride and prejudice of the Britisher. The Anglo-Indian community which has been the chief victim of this pride and prejudice, is not prepared any longer to submit to patronage. It has, in a measure itself been a sinner in this respect in the past under the tutelage of its ancestors, but the scales have fallen from the eyes of Anglo-Indians. They are alive, awake to the changes all around them and will join other communities in India to see that the old order in India is replaced by the new order."

Did not Sir Henry advise the Anglo-Indian women to don the sari? How many of them followed his advice? He was far ahead of his people and thought in terms of his community playing an exceedingly useful part as a unit of united India. Having used both his hands extremely well as a first-rate eye surgeon, with fifty thousand operations for cataract to his credit, he instinctively understood the advantages of the twin-alliance between the two countries, deeply conscious of the fact that any unfavourable outweighing by the stronger scale would materially jeopardise peace and harmony. He was a Gold Medallist in Medicine, Surgery, Dentistry and Ophthalmology. Born in Igatpuri, in the Bombay Presidency, Gidney was the acknowledged leader of the Anglo-Indian and European Domiciled community for over quarter of a century. Esteemed in the world's highest ophthalmological circles as a

master craftsman, he won the unique distinction of being the post-graduate lecturer in Ophthalmology at Oxford. He was proud of that rare, very rare gift of ambidexterity and that enabled him to perform the record number of cataract operations for any eye surgeon in the world. Tiger shooting was his greatest passion and he once jestingly told that one half of his day was devoted to killing and the other half to healing! On one day of his sensational surgical activity, having performed nearly seventy cataract operations, the last few by candlelight (for that was long ago, before the use of electricity fully invaded our land!), he packed off, post-haste on a tiger-shooting trip with a Maharaja and bagged two tigers, shooting with both his right and left hand!

It wasn't merely his powerful eye or skilful hand that accounted for his greatest achievements. His unflagging tongue was the saviour of his community. Gidney's tongue was both his reputation and his community's deputation to London. Bhulabhai Desai paid him a handsome tribute when he spoke at the Bombay Mayor's Memorial Meeting held to mourn his loss: "Gidney spoke for us, he spoke against us, he spoke for Government, he spoke against them, with a wealth of humour and goodwill that this great pioneer of your community has left behind him nothing but regrets on his death and treasured memories for all of us."

There are only three powers in this world that can effectively reckon with politicians—money, violence and the tongue! Money to soothe and oil the politicians; violence to intimidate them; and the tongue to annoy them! Gidney and his kind were too honest to be rich; hence he failed to soothe the tribe of politicians. He was too loyal to the British connection and very constitutional in his veins to be violent; therefore, he could not resort to this weapon to frighten the ignoble breed of politicians. But he found

his greatest asset in dexterously and successfully wagging his tongue as hard as he could and lengthening it as far as London! That explains why the British Parliament singled out the British community in India for all the benefits under the sun, because of the power of their purse; the Sikhs because they handled efficiently and dangerously their *kirpan*; and the Muslims on account of the aggressive weight of their numbers. The Anglo-Indians felt that they were deprived of all these profits and benefits. However, Gidney's tongue was theirs for the asking and Anglo-Indians found in him the best man to wag it successfully in their favour.

How he did it is a matter of history. At the Round Table Conference in London in 1931 he spoke passionately of his people's plight :

"For a moment look at the community that I represent; hitherto an Indian and not an Indian, a Briton and not a Briton; claimed by each when we are useful to them, rejected when the time comes for the division of political and economic guerdons. We have done our best to be loyal to both the countries and we shall continue in that endeavour."

Gidney's powerful advocacy of his people's interests resulted in the Anglo-Indian enjoying protection through statutes and established government conventions. When the Government of India Act of 1935 was on the parliamentary anvil he succeeded in securing amendments in favour of his people, a performance deemed a notable achievement almost without parallel in parliamentary annals. The Delhi Congress daily, *Hindustan Times*, wrote : "To the clerk who has been wrongfully dismissed and the officer whose claims for preferment had been overlooked, he gave a patient hearing and once convinced of the righteousness of the case he was espousing, he would move heaven and earth to see that justice was done."

Gidney firmly believed that the economic uplift of the Anglo-Indian lay not in his position being protected

by statute or convention or Government resolution but by extensive education. He approached Sir Stafford Cripps when he was out on his official mission to India with the proposal that the British Government should give them a capital grant for better educational facilities. He also believed that the future of his community would lie on the land. They founded three colonies of their community. Economy to offset their thriftlessness and capacity for strenuous work to obliterate their easy-going way of life—these were the essential requisites for a small landholder. The colonisation schemes launched by the community were failures. At any rate their progress could be assessed only after two generations had passed away.

Gidney possessed a gift of humour and he had another priceless gift—he was a brilliant raconteur. He retailed from his big bag any number of interesting incidents. Writing verses or drawing caricatures of colleagues whilst the Assembly debates were on, or flooding the house with his humour in any tense situation, when the atmosphere was surcharged with gravity—were the features of the lighter side of his life, entirely devoted to public service. His consuming passion was to give a lead to his people. Gidney wanted to retire from public life five years before his death; but the grave situation by which the country was plunged into the war, prevented him from enjoying his well earned rest. The economic position of his people caused him much distress. He represented to Government petitioning that additional space to the extent of thousands of acres of land be freely annexed to the McCluskiejung Colony. The question of his successor worried him a lot. He had to choose between Frank Anthony and S. H. Prater, the intrepid and able Bombay M.L.A., and preferred the Jubbulpore orator and criminal lawyer to the wise and accommodating keeper of the Bombay Natural History Museum. Before he died he managed to enlist almost the

entire strength of his community's man-power and every available woman for the War.

"We are as much Indian Nationals as are the extremist Congressmen. The only difference is that while the Congressman insists upon the right to sever British connection with India, we would consider it an act of treason to our very origin to agree to such a condition."

were his parting words. His young successor pleaded differently though he also preserved the substance on the ground of common culture and direct consciousness. Whilst loyalty to Government was the instinctive attribute, they shouldn't be blamed for it. It was part of their origin and cultural environment and was in no way opposed to their love of this, their Motherland and fellow-feeling with every other Indian community. They would always ask for India's trust and friendship of the communities and felt that that would not be denied to them. They begged forgiveness for their past mistakes, was Frank Anthony's first public utterance on assuming leadership, fallen vacant by Gidney's death. Whether the Anglo-Indian of the future will be able to cut off his double loyalty and shine in his single virtue is a matter for the future. They are still unable to look forward boldly into the future without looking backwards, into the faces of their ancestors! The Anglo-Indian must now definitely turn his back on that old normal patronising attitude, embodied in that antiquated current: "He is in India but not of it. Of the West but not in it. All he can do, therefore, is to constitute the most clearly defined of all the castes in India, the ruling caste, and become a god sitting in an Olympus!" The Anglo-Indian will soon have to make his choice. Will he choose to remain British long after he has ceased to be an Englishman?





LORD HAILEY





## LORD HAILEY

**C**AZOTTI, that unscrupulous journalist in the romantic state of Valdania, depicted by Israel Zangwill excessively desired :—

“Government has become a habit with me—call it a vice. Without power I feel like the opium eater without his drug . . . I want this new and concentrated form of it—decrees, ukases, rules, regulations, registrations, restrictions, prescriptions, perquisitions, inquisitions, raids, confiscations, censorship, compulsory labour, dictation at the bayonet’s point, without public meetings, without newspapers, without parliaments,—ye gods, what a flavour! How does it taste. Comrade, how does it taste?”

Ask Lord Hailey about it all! Salute this general of the “sun-dried and curry-pickled veterans of the East,” to borrow a phrase of Aldous Huxley! The captain of these birds of prey and passage, with ever increasing appetites, has at last retired to the salubrious climate of the Upper House. The House of Lords was never known to have received unto its bosom a member-of-the-all-powerful steel frame until Sir Malcolm Hailey completed his dashing triumphs in three provincial capitals of the Indian Empire. He experienced all the thrills of a bureaucrat and the joys of an over-lord as the Chief Commissioner of Delhi, Governor of Punjab and lastly as the Governor of the United Provinces, not without first dabbling into and mismanaging the finances of the country as the Finance Member and a little later by antagonising everybody as the Home Member to the Government of India. His financial maladministration forced the late Marquis Reading to import a city man in the person of the late Sir Basil Blackett. With the play of pronounced hatred on the floor of the Legislative Assembly engendered by this super-man of the Civil Service between the Swarajists and the bueau-

crats and after that fine, clever distinction he sought to make between "Responsible Government" and "Dominion Status," Lord Irwin was forced to patch it all by his unequivocal declaration about Dominion Status. But Malcolm Hailey played his trump-card as the most brilliant Civilian Governor of India; eventually to be despatched to instruct and inform the members of the Round Table Conference, so as to make all the requisite permanent adjustments or *bandobast* for his caste-men. For seeing the avalanche of Congress victories at the polls, he forgot his gubernatorial duties, and turned into an active, advance electioneering agent for the decaying, feudal classes. Someone scottishly suggested that the schemes of service men had been shattered by the sweeping Congress victories and thus "the plans o' mice and men gang aft agley." From thence he proceeded to survey the Empire in Africa and refused to retire in dignified ease.

Lord Hailey is hailed as the ablest member who has adorned the Indian Civil Service, which is neither Indian, National, nor any kind of real service. It runs on the same old lines of the Holy Roman Empire, which was neither holy, Roman nor an Empire. Hailey is the high-priest of that system which has pathetically thrived on "habit without philosophy, power without principle and authority without justice." It plays on the same vast territory, wherein the British once opened their innocent-looking warehouses at Surat and managed to swallow up the whole surface of the land. On the wall of the House of Commons, there is the picture of Sir Thomas Roe going to the Moghul Emperor as a friend and fraternal delegate from the British Court and then ultimately, wiping out the whole line of Indian Emperors, bringing the entire country within their control. The activities of the Directors of the East India Company excited the just misgivings of William Cowper :—

"The thieves at home must hang; but he that puts,

## LORD HAILEY

Into his over-gorged and bloated purse,  
The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes."

So started the rule of the Whitehall nabobs, and each succeeding dynasty was more powerful than its predecessor, including the present one. The line of succession initiated by the Indian Civil Service was guaranteed unto perpetuity. Burke's indictment on Fox's India Bill in 1783 rings true to this day :—

"It is our protection that destroys India. It was their enmity but it is our friendship. Our conquest there after twenty years is as crude as it was the first day. The natives scarcely know what it is to see the grey head of an Englishman; young men, boys almost, govern them without society and without sympathy with the natives. They have no more social habits with the people than if they still resided in England; nor indeed any species of intercourse but that which is necessary to making a sudden future, with a view to a remote settlement. Animated with all the avarice of the age, and all the impetuosity of youth, they roll in one after another wave and there is nothing before the eyes of the natives but an endless, hopeless prospect of new flights of birds of prey and passage, with appetites continually renewing for a food that is wasting. Every rupee of profit made by an Englishman is for ever lost to India."

The men constituting the service were truly described by one of their kind, who ate the humble pie at the hands of one of the wisest men who ruled the India Office. Sir Bamfylde Fuller, the ex-Governor of East Bengal, quite a notorious figure in the days of the Bengal Partition, wrote thus of the Civilians :—"They learn no law worth the name, a little Indian history, no political economy and they gain a smattering of one Indian vernacular." Fuller resigned in a huff and his resignation was promptly accepted by Minto and Morley. This ex-Governor condemns the inadequate equipment of the I.C.S. "as an insult to the intelligence of the country." Their creed was efficiency for its own sake regardless at what it was directed. Efficiency

aimed at destruction can only end in its own annihilation. Edwin Samuel Montague gave them their due when he wrote in his *Indian Diary* :—"They worship efficiency; they are proud of their own work and they will not risk it for anything." A real study of the mind of the people, with whom they would have to do so much, formed no part of their education. The more they tried to meddle with the popular will, the less was the chance of promotion. They were to hold their tongues unless they were attacked. Sir Hugh Clayton, the brother of "Tubby" Clayton of Toc H. fame, praised the splendid civic work of the late Vithalbhai Patel in the Bombay Municipal Corporation. The eulogiser was the executive head and the eulogised the President of the Municipality. It is an open secret that Clayton was never forgiven for publicly pouring out praise on Patel, with the result he was always shunted from the prize-jobs in the Service and did not reach half the height scaled by a Hailey !

"Cast-iron bureaucracy won't go on for ever" was the dictum of Morley; and indicting Sir Bamfylde Fuller, his judgment ran : "He is evidently a shrewdish, impulsive, overflowing sort of man, quite well fitted for government work of ordinary scope, but I fear, no more fitted to manage the state of things in Eastern Bengal and Assam than I am to drive an engine . . . I don't believe it is for the good of prestige to back up every official whatever he does, right or wrong . . . He hadn't the least expectation that we should accept his resignation—such a thing had never happened before. When he opened the fatal telegram of acceptance, he was astounded."

That episode heartily reveals the mind of the Indian Civil Service. Fuller protested to Morley that acceptance of his resignation lowered "the official prestige" in the minds of the "natives"! More acceptances of such resignations, would have put Indo-British relations on a better footing.

The relations between Sir William Marris, another ungovernable product of the Service (a predecessor of Lord

Hailey in the U. P. *gadi*) and Montague powerfully indicate the bureaucratic mind. Marris co-operated with Montague, whilst the latter was out in India in the final drafting of the Montague-Chelmsford Report. Let's have it in Montague's own style :—

"Marris said that in ordinary circumstances he would have been proud of the thanks which the Viceroy and I proposed to offer to him, but that we had so altered the report that he was ashamed of it; he could not face the men whose opinion he valued most in the world—Meston and Curtis . . . I listened to his complaints, argued with him; shifted him in some respect . . . but his complaints were ridiculously small . . . I then dressed him down and spoke quite straightly to him. I told him that I never met a man with a greater devotion to duty and greater industry . . . But he failed, like everybody else in India failed, from having no political instinct, of despising political science . . . that the I. C. S. had been so long accustomed to state their conclusions without reasoning them. I therefore told him that, whilst leaving him to do the drafting, I must insist that I must be the judge of whether what I wanted to say was brought out or whether what was said was intelligible . . . nor would I accept his judgement on matters that I had not investigated; it was a report of what I believed, and not what he believed. Straight talks of this type do no harm."

More Morleys and Montagues presiding at the India Office would have shattered the morale of the Civilians and broken the back of their prestige in this country. The occasion on which Morley wrote to Minto when he became indignant with the attitude of the Civilian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council is significant :—

"And, by the way, now that we have got down the rusty sword of 1818, I wish you would deport . . . and . . . (two officials); what do you say? I should defend that operation with verve."

The Indian Civilians possessed no grace, the first stock-in-trade of real servants. They attempted to boss and rule their very masters. Just imagine Montague's exasperation

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

over their obstructionist tactics—how they strove to dictate terms to him when he was actually on the saddle of the great Moghul at Whitehall. The watchwords of one of Britain's most distinguished Eastern Pro-Consuls, the late Lord Cromer, who served varying British Ministries in Egypt, were :—

“I am too old an official hack to mind in the very least my opinion being set aside. I shall carry out faithfully whatever instructions I receive. But do not ask me to say that I approve of the arrangement; that I am unable to do. I think it a bad one”.

Our supremely self-satisfied Civilians will not find a grain of wisdom in that advice.

The Indian Civil Service men only know the scientific code of the firm hand; they emphatically believe that Orientals have not tasted anything else. The Indian understands only the “hookum” business. Had not Morley himself put out for exhibition the essence of Machiavelli's philosophy :—

“Man is what he is, so he needs to be bitted and bridled with laws and now and again to be treated to a stiff dose of “*medicine forti*” in the shape of fire, bullet, axe, halter, or dungeon . . . clear intelligence backed by unsparing will, unflinching energy, remorseless vigour, the brain to plan and the hand to strike . . . here is the salvation of States”.

Our Servicemen, from whose fertile brains sprang the ideas of Ordinance rule which has tainted the administration of this country for over a decade now, improved upon the naive method of the Queen in *Alice in Wonderland*, who decreed :—“Punishment first, trial afterwards.” Ours went a little ahead of that fantastic Queen. Ours somewhat promulgated :—*Arrest first, invent and fit in the crime afterwards!* The Service men, fired with the grand ideas of keeping the Empire safe for John Bull, in which process they obtained the silent approval of their “black” confreres, devised political trials without any show of real justice. The ordinance legislation they got passed through

pliant and dummy legislatures, with the due flourishes of the Viceregal certification-pens, whenever required and thereafter accused and condemned our patriots in one and the same breath. The strict Gandhian adherents never bothered about defending themselves. They presented themselves willing and cheerful victims of the repressive ordinance factories. No wonder Dumas wrote that "political trials are always empty formalities; for the same passion which brings the accusation pronounces the judgment."

Burke's warning in his historic speech on conciliation with America bears repetition in the present crisis :—

"Every hour you continue on this ill-chosen ground, your difficulties thicken on you, and therefore my conclusion is remove from a bad position as quickly as you can. The disgrace and necessity of yielding, both of them, grow upon you every hour of your delay".

Why should they worry ? After us the Deluge—must also be their consolation and all the time they go on paying lip service to the ideal of self-government, believing and working that the goal is unapproachable !

The attraction for this world-famous Civil Service spread amongst Indians right from the beginning. In fact its security lay in the measure of glamour it afforded the Indian, who was allowed to get in only by sheer *mehrbani*! The door was for long barred and bolted against the intrusion of the "nigger" into this Empire preserve of heaven-born men! The average Indian, both of the middle and higher classes, deemed it the greatest ambition of his life to "adorn" these ranks, by competition or nomination. The Lee Commissioners granted all concessions to the "Home" men in the Service but also laid down that within a certain period the number of Indians in the service should be equal to that of the Europeans. They ran in the race for examinations at London and New Delhi. Brilliant young men these, draining away their genius and ancestral wealth in scrambling for a seat in the competitive lists.



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

Many were called but only a few chosen! Immediately after Montague's declaration, the Service men almost openly rebelled. They thought that their days were over and a large number of them quickly sailed away for good, on proportionate pension. Though the glamour was "killed" by Mahatma Gandhi, they still dictated to the line of Viceroys and Governors, as if theirs was a regulated, holy, apostolic succession. Gandhi stormed and shattered their fortress of untouchability! The glory and *izzat* of the Civilian boss in the districts or rural parts of India was once and for all shattered by the Mahatma.

The Civil Service men till then managed the destinies of His Britannic Majesty's Indian Empire, invested with long tradition and prestige. They played that humbug of making their interests appear to be exactly the interests of the people of India. The mandarinat of the old empire of China had its counter-part in her sister Oriental country of Hindustan. Theoretically the Chinese Emperor was supreme; so also the British Parliament through the Secretary of State and his collaborator "on the spot," the Viceroy of India. But the mandarinat composed of "a group of scholar-politicians, who secured their positions by passing competitive examinations," were the *de facto* rulers of old China. The mandarinat, never hereditary, was recruited from all classes and communities; it was the ambition of every Chinese family or clan or village to give one of its members to the mandarinat.

The "educated" Indian youth was enslaved by the emoluments of the I.C.S. To him these three letters after his name, spelt the elusive path of social success and financial security. Radhakrishnan has eloquently expatiated on this subject:—

"He goes about seeing people and dancing attendance on the powers that be, for a title or ribbon. There are no vacant spaces in his life but all is one frightful notion due-

## LORD HAILEY

to ambition and avarice. Life is stifled and over-tasked. Man has time only for animal pleasures and not for divine joy. If he worships anything, it is money, which he deifies. He thinks it is the only thing that makes life worth living . . . He feels a stranger in his own home”.

The Indian who is enrolled in the I.C.S. at once joins a caste as powerful and orthodox as any other orthodox caste of Hindustan, with this difference that it possesses no soul. It is dead and wooden, inelastic and immobile, static and reactionary. Nothing good can come out of it.

Sir Henry Cotton, a brilliant member of the I.C.S. and once a British delegate to the Indian National Congress in the days of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta has observed in his *India and Home Memories* that the fact that the young Civilian is a stranger in a strange land and that his own countrymen out here din it into his ears that all Indians are rogues and his Indian subordinates keep him in complete ignorance of truth by adopting in all their dealings with him the maxim—“If you want to win a Sahib’s favour never contradict him!” Those Indians who had access to British officials gave expression to views and statements which were calculated to please that official’s ears. Of his own experience as a junior Officer, Sir Henry wrote :

“We were directly encouraged to assume an attitude of a patronising and superior character, which was obviously inimical to the best influences which should be exercised in the service.”

Yet British Imperialism triumphed in roping in some of the finest youths of the country in this service. The classic set scheme of competitive examinations, closed for the Indian youth the only true path of knowing the mind of his own people, which he sometimes condescendingly attempted to understand through the backdoor of musty files and that dreaded official instrument of instructions. He soon became an adept at red tapism, buried in manuals and files, in forms of soulless prestige and false dignity, unleavened by the force of true culture or genuine courtesy.

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

He became as much of a Bourbon as his "white" colleague. A Mehta who spent some time in diving into the sphere of his country's hoary past, or earlier a Dutt delving into the crushed economic greatness of his motherland, was an exception who proved the rule. The Indian who gets into the I.C.S. has merely trained himself to ride horses and score marks and search for a place at the top, after finally hurling other competitors down-stairs. The Indian I.C.S. has soaring ambition but is ultimately happy with backstair influence or position, all the upper crusts or top jobs being specially reserved for the European, who would complete this process of shame for the Indian by just putting up a board, "Let no dog or Indian enter here!" The trouble about the "Indian" Indian Civilian is that if he is due for an acting Governorship, he will be either prematurely retired, or posted to another sinecure, or much worse, the "white" incumbent will wait for a convenient time to retire or get off the field so that he is sure to be succeeded by one of his own skin! In the pursuit of his small ambition to join and take a downstairs job under these barons and overloads of Hindustan, the Indian forgets he owes a duty to his fellow-men. He must obtain a flying start through a London or New Delhi examination; then the process of annihilation of the finest feelings entertained in his teens or early youth quickly sets in. Once he is in, his one concern is to go to the top. The I.C.S. frowned upon men with independent way of thinking; any originality was quarantined.

Subhas Chandra Bose and his lieutenant, H. V. Kamath, blazed the trail of the pioneering Indians in the Indian Civil Service, who would not touch that system even with a pair of tongs when once the call of the Motherland went forth. Their lead was unmistakable when their souls revolted under the oppressive weight of efficiency and ruthlessness and reaction rampant in the entire organisation. The moment Subhas and Kamath realised the wrong path their

## LORD HAILEY

earlier ambitions led them into, they resigned their jobs in the I.C.S. and flung everything on the altar of duty and sacrifice. They exchanged the charms, security and stability of the Service for the rigours of national existence, which invariably lead to the dungeons in this country.

Malcolm Hailey was the arch-duke and darling of the Indian Civil Service. There was no plum or ribbon which did not yield to the slightest touch of his ambition. In fact his name was bruited for the Viceroyalty of India. That would have been out-heroding Herod himself! He was the typical representative and mouth-piece of that bureaucracy which consigned thousands of Indian patriots to the penalties of jail life. These Civilians governed the provinces of Hindustan, displaying neither imagination nor common-sense, but displaying plenty of efficiency, firmness and honesty as they boastfully put it. Their bureacuracy was over-centralised, expensive and arrogant and they claimed to cure all ills under the sun! Nothing dazzled more than their purest self-esteem! Having enjoyed power for years together, Malcolm Hailey dreaded the prospect of its passing away into unwelcome hands. He was worried about the "grant of power, new and undreamt of power, which would pass into hands capable of wresting and exercising it."

During his Governorship of the United Provinces, between repression and remission, he scotched the whole of the No-Tax campaign in 1932. Hailey stepped in with repression, locked up the leaders, and refused to allow Jawaharlal to see Mahatma Gandhi at Bombay, on his return from the Round Table Conference in London. He insulted Nehru by refusing to see him; he asked him to see his Chief Secretary. Hailey saw Gandhi and would not elevate Jawaharlal to the same position, not foreseeing that the Mahatma was to openly declare him his heir-apparent. This high-priest of the Indian Civil Service forged his weapons and blew his trumpet. Jawaharlal had proclaimed

the efficacy of his kisan-fighters. Everyone was ready for the rebellion, and thereafter the country would be soon enveloped in flames. The world had only to go forth and the revolutionary forces would go marching and singing along freedom's way! But Malcolm Hailey was too seasoned a Secretariat strategist to let his civilian knowledge plus brains get rusty and permit trouble within his borders. He got in his blow before Jawaharlal became too strong. Hence his anxiety to get his blow in before the antagonist fired. Hailey promptly acted on the advice tendered by a pugilist before :—"Twice armed is he who hath his quarrel just; three times the man who gets his blow in fust." The U.P. has been the harbinger of civil resistance and on two historic occasions, when Jawaharlal was arrested in 1931 and ten years later in 1941, fierce national struggle ensued. Gandhi did not know until he sailed into the Arabian Sea that Jawaharlal had been arrested. Like Pericles who anticipated the Spartan menace to his beloved native city of Athens, Gandhi, through the unresponsive tone of the hosts at the Round Table at London, "already beheld war swooping down upon them," from the side of the rulers.

The Indian Civil Service, of which Malcolm Hailey was the finest pattern, played its trump card. It forged weapons never before devised in the history of India since the days of the Mutiny. The Civilians drafted and printed for circulation amongst their Secretariat wiseacres all the outrageous clauses of the Ordinances when Gandhi was arguing and pleading at the Round Table Conference. It was all accomplished by Hailey on the specious and unjust and unkind plea that Jawaharlal was running riot amongst the U.P. peasantry. Babu Purshotamdas Tandon and T. K. Sherwani of pathetic memory were also jailed along with Jawaharlal. Malcolm Hailey got the chance of his life to play the role of saviour of the Empire, for which he was eventually and uncommonly rewarded with a peerage.

## LORD HAILEY

Having started repression, he ended with remission of revenues. With this double-edged weapon, he almost smashed the insurrection of the kisans of the United Provinces.

Malcolm Hailey went over to the United Provinces Governorship in the midstream of his Punjab Governorship on account of the sudden death of that merry bachelor Chieftain, Sir Alexander Muddiman. Hailey passed on a communal cauldron to his successor in the Punjab, Sir Henry Emerson, who had spilt lots of ink on the salt clauses and formulas of the Gandhi-Irwin Truce. The Punjab trouble ultimately led to pitched communal battles on the streets of Lahore. The Sikhs were in revolt against the Government and not all the sweet reasonableness and manoeuvring of Hailey, helped to solve the crisis, even though the aid of Lord Birdwood was requisitioned to placate the Sikhs.

Earlier the late Sir Alexander Muddiman's cheerful bantering and *bonhomie* in the Legislative Assembly as the Home Member of the Government of India and his frequent friendly parleys with the Swarajists afforded positive relief after the fierce antagonisms and Patel-Motilal baitings indulged in by Hailey. Yet he boasted all the time that he was essentially an Assembly man and fostered the best parliamentary traditions. Before this, his record as Finance Member was disastrous to the interests of the country. How can we efface the bitter memory of "Reverse Councils" under his financial regime at Government Headquarters, when he made this country lose in one mad stroke of unbridled gambling, fifty crores of our hard-earned money? The House of Commons would have impeached him as a public malefactor; but such gross acts of exploitation in a series of such acts are easily overlooked in India and covered under acts of constitutional civilian brilliance! Further, how can Hailey escape the blame for the muddle of the two-shilling rupee? Lots of plausible explanations will however be forthcoming.

Commenting on the "greatness" of Hailey, Pandit Jawaharlal held him up as "a model Governor" and tendered the advice :—

"Why not make Sir Malcolm a kind of super-Governor for the training under him of selected candidates for various Governorships? These aspirants might go through a brief course and learn how to deliver a vice-chancellor's address with occasional classical references and many pious platitudes and a special dissertation on the danger of students or teachers dabbling in politics (all pro-Government activities of course not being considered politics); how to answer an address from a municipal board and criticise its finances with a special dissertation on the undesirability of municipalities mixing civics with politics (this of course having nothing to do with municipal teachers and others joining *Aman Sabhas* and similar organisations and publicly working against such illegal or undesirable organisations like the Congress); how to praise the Police for their loyalty, efficiency, self-sacrifice, patriotism, gentleness, non-violence, amiability, sweet reasonableness and purity of conduct and tell them how they are above politics and state their sole duty is to preserve law and order at any cost so that the nation may live peacefully and contentedly under the shadow of their protection; how to address legislatures and praise the members for their statesmanship and moral courage in supporting government, in good and evil report, in holding on to their seats when Congress and other nationalists would not touch them with a pair of tongs; and further tell that the British Government always stands for democracy as against dictatorship (it being made clear that the Viceroy's and Governors' vast powers and ordinances are not in the nature of dictatorship but only meant as safeguards in the interests of special responsibility); how to reply at Princes' banquets by praising the progressive rule of the princes, who in the course of a decade have succeeded in establishing one secondary school, two primary schools, two dispensaries, a zoo with a monkey house, three game preserves specially reserved for Viceroys and Governors and their friends from abroad, ten large motor garages, five stables for ponies, kennels for a large number of dogs, a jazz band, and six new palaces to provide

work for labour; and that in further consideration of the people's welfare, the princes keep away in Europe for most of the time and also point out that autocracy is obviously suited to the genius of India; how to address an association of businessmen and merchants and show that politics must not be mixed up with business and trade and true success and prosperity lie in businessmen sticking to their own jobs and co-operating with Government and the City of London so that India's credit may stand high; how to address zamindars and taluqdars and agreeing with them that they are the salt of the Indian earth, encouraging them in every way to organise themselves and take part in politics, so that the semi-feudal zamindari system, which is ideal for India, might continue and vested interests may be protected and the constitution may have lasting stability;...and so on...and so forth.....".

This superman of the Civil Service, fit enough to open a school for apprentice-Governors, was delegated to London as the watch-dog of his Service during the sessions of the Round Table Conference, along with Sir Charles Innes, whose "wise" policy in Burma, was one of the major causes for the loss of Burma to the British. Both these famed exponents of the Civil Service took upon their shoulders the job of safeguarding the rights of unborn Civilians! Sir Charles Innes improved upon the Hailey methods. This ex-Governor of Burma frankly admitted that the case for the separation of Burma from India was manoeuvred by himself and other I.C.S. Officers of Burma. He confessed that the memorandum submitted to the Simon Commission by them, making out a case for separation "was a purely bureaucratic proposition." Shades of Secretariat schemes of 1931 to deport Congress leaders to Kuria-Muria Islands or better still to the Andamans!

"To the bureaucrats, it was just a case and they had no axe to grind. Their sole object was to find right judgment on fact and what was best for the country they served,"

was what Innes declared. Have they ever served any just or real interests of the country, howsoever much they may



## **MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN**

claim to have done so, with pots of good-will on their side. Their memorandum, went on Sir Charles Innes, was just a secretariat study of the question, trying to set out arguments fairly for and against separation !

This ex-Governor of Burma, the bosom pal of Malcolm Hailey and his twin-companion in the glories and vicissitudes of the R.T.C., put out all that stuff after the irretrievable rout of the Separationists in the Burma General Elections of 1932. The British Government was deluded into the step of allowing Burmans to express their opinion on a straight issue and Burman opinion declared itself overwhelmingly against separation from India. Sir Samuel Hoare, the then Secretary of State for India, confessed he could not conceal his disappointment at the Anti-Separationists' sweeping victory at the polls. The world was to be fooled into believing that Burmans did not want to remain together with Indians, and the colossal efforts of the Indian Civil Service men, headed by Sir Charles Innes ended in a rout. The Burman bureaucratic band was stunned. The European Civilian bureaucrats officially composed terminological inexactitudes with a persistency so as to elevate mendacity to the rank of a prized virtue in public life.

Hailey would not depart from this country until he whipped up in vain the forces of reaction by turning into their advance-guard electioneering agent. He aided them in every possible manner by exhortation to stand up and wrest power for themselves. When the Swarajists were about to enter the Assembly for the first time, he sounded the alarm that the "Huns and Scythians were about to overrun and pillage legislative chambers." Having found them more than a match for his cunning and strategy—he realised before his departure from India that the Swarajists would play with Ministries in as much a destructive manner as they had played with the legislatures on their first entrance into them. He boasted about the security

the second chamber provided for all the bourgeois provinces. He pressed for a strong rural party of landlords and nabobs which would compete for power with the strongest popular elements. Hailey urged them to exercise every ounce of prudence and self-interest against the onrush of popular currents. He begged them to combat the Congress and lay the foundation of a powerful and potent provincial administration which would wipe off the discreditable and disreputable faction of the Congress! He promised to hold the field of administration till they got strong and came along to take over the reins.

“You will need a party organisation, supported by party funds and held compact by party discipline. There is no place for political purdah. The new constitution will be a failure if you fail to capture power and allow victory for the Congress. It is no use shuddering on the bank. It is no use to hope that the stream will go down. Start building a boat now and you will become the masters of the situation.”

All his fine crutches went to pieces beyond repair in the order of new dispensation shaped by himself and his friendly collaborators!

When, however, everything failed, the Civilians were again ready to exercise all the powers under the guise of emergency and break-down of the constitution and what not! The country went back to where it was almost half a century before as illustrated by the rule of Governors' Advisers in the Provinces, after the outbreak of World War II. The late Mr. W. J. Whitley, the ex-Speaker of the House of Commons who presided over the Royal Indian Commission for Labour and toured the villages and towns of the country was profoundly impressed with the capacity for self-government displayed by the Indian peasant and described their discussions as some of the most sensible he had ever heard in his life. He is reported to have remarked that the British were being efficiently governed by illiterate kings! That revealing remark from the man who

closely surveyed Ministers through the Speaker's wig is significant of our bureaucratic rule in contrast to the efficiently managed affairs of our own peasants who run their business in their own interests.

It is time that we closed the episode of this prince of ex-satraps, who ascended from the small District Officer-ship to the giddy heights of peerage, warning, dreading and thwarting the forces of Indian Nationalism. Those were the heydays of the Civil Service when Malcolm Hailey started as a District Officer, when that office had no parallel in modern times. He was the *paterfamilias* of a large family, the father and the mother of the district and for long the bureaucrats trumpeted the *ma bap* theory on a gullible and credulous world, especially its Indian part. The goddess of ambition emptied its entire bag of fortune on her favourite child and found no more gift to offer him, this super-man of the saga of Civil Service. The Indian Civil Service has neither a satisfactory historian nor annalist; but it found its prized pattern in this great servant who claimed to have faithfully served the land of his adoption for nearly forty years, and credited with having taken leave only thrice to England, the three periods together not amounting to more than a year! Hailey left nothing behind except the name of his career as one of the greatest administrators Britain sent out to India. All that was left behind were only the sad remains of his only child, a gifted daughter, who was cut off in the prime of her youth to the distress of her dear parents. She died before she could witness the amazing heights her father scaled rapidly in the exalted order of Civil Service Succession, which assures a "white" incumbent anything from four hundred to ten thousand rupees every month! We cannot forget the devotion of Lady Hailey, who left the home of her father, Count Hannibale Balzani, in Italy, and shared the Punjab desert life with her husband at the beginning of his career. The British editorials ran :—

## LORD HAILY

“In his riper years Sir Malcolm was her gift to India, for it was through her effort that his life was preserved from plague. Many have witnessed her goodness, her kind heartedness and her courage in a hundred different directions.”

The Government of India Act of 1935 killed one dynasty of Civil Service rulers in this country, ushering in another more potent and influential than its predecessor. The new succession was firmly established with Civil Service men installed as Governors, in eight out of eleven provinces of Hindustan, though not one single Indian I.C.S. man was found worthy to fill even an acting appointment! Names of old fat jobs may have disappeared altogether in the new Act, but new ones, more powerful than before were created and endowed with supreme power for another century until the granite strength of Indian freedom smashed the chain and freed the nation. Till then, long live the Indian Civil Service with its prodigies and prize-boys of Haileys !





**BENJAMIN GUY HORNIMAN**



## BENJAMIN GUY HORNIMAN

**T**HE Dandi March was over and Gandhi clapped in prison. Bombay marched out in protest. The city never witnessed such a spectacle of human heads strewn from Bori Bunder to Apollo Bunder. Men and women, boys and girls, Muslims and Sikhs, Parsis, Hindus and Christians, volunteers and flute-players were all there, surrounded by hundreds of Europeans, of either sex, residents of the Fort area, willing or unwilling witnesses of a Nation's protest! Two hundred thousand souls were they in all. The invasion of the "sanctum" of the city upset the police, for no crowd, much less a Gandhi crowd, dare interfere with the European residents congregated in the Fort and Colaba localities. There was a boisterous section which comprised the impatient part of this big demonstration. It specialised in crying off the head-gear of the adjoining spectators, despite the Police sergeants and *pili pagdiwallas* called out in full force. A tall impressive, well proportioned, blue-eyed Englishman stood at a corner with his hat on, quietly watching. He seemed to silently see the effect of his great work. He had written for such an end. He longed for a down trodden nation's regeneration and that day he viewed with happiness a stupendous event that would lead on to the goal. Words and lines and paras he poured out to bring forth the desired effect. He watched with intense enthusiasm and joy, the tens of thousands that composed the titanic procession. But the intolerant section recognised him not and demanded, "*topi nikalo!*" The response to the shout was instantaneous. Off went the Englishman's hat in homage to the great one, whose frail body had been barred and bolted behind the Yeravda Prison. Somebody recognised the silent spectator and whispered his name to his unruly companions. They felt ashamed and drowned their feeling in rounds of applause—"Horniman ki Jai"!



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

Let us shift the scene a little earlier. The All-India Congress Committee under the Presidentship of Srinivasa Iyengar met at Bombay in 1927 to discuss the communal proposals. All the leaders—Nationalist Muslims and Hindus were there. Our friend, Jayakar was putting up a defence for his communalism though he would be hurt not to be called a thorough Nationalist. A voice rang out: "Will you please resign from the Mahasabha to prove your *bona fides*"? Jayakar's admirers in the A.I.C.C. angrily demanded, "Who said that?" Eyes turned up and down to spot the victim. "I said that!" were the words that shot forth from a blue-eyed Englishman. "It's Horniman!"—the interrupters were shamed into silence. It was one of those moments that impress themselves indelibly on the mind—a moment when words are certainly useless and the memory of an attitude and of a silence remains unforgettable.

The transfer of the Indian Capital from Calcutta to Delhi transformed an upholder of Imperialism, a member of the governing class, the son of an ex-Pay-Master-in-Chief of the British Royal Navy and the brother of a Rear-Admiral and a famous actor, into the staunchest advocate of Indian Independance. Calcutta was rocked with the sensation of the transfer of the capital to the dead haunts of Rajahs and Badshahs at Delhi. Disgusted with intrigues and the uncongenial atmosphere at Chowringhee, infested with die-hard British businessmen, Horniman resigned the Assistant Editorship of the *Statesman* in 1912 and walked home one evening contemplating what the future held for him. On reaching home a letter awaited him. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, whom Horniman had not till then seen or known at all had written requesting him to come to Bombay and edit a new nationalist daily founded by him in the Capital of Western India. The Lion of Bombay cast his eyes for a man to pilot his new venture and got this gallant Englishman, who spurned all temptations of ascending to the top of the ruling ladder. The late Pat Lovett, the "Ditcher" of the *Capital*

has described the situation through which Horniman came to edit the Bombay paper; for Sir Pherozeshah Mehta had him also in view, for the editorship of the paper. "Ditcher" felt gratified he was not at the *Chronicle*, for he would never have been able to bring it to the pitch of excellence that Horniman had attained for it, "and made it a power in the land." Surendranath Bannerjee, the trumpet-voice of the anti-Bengal partition, had highly commended Horniman to Pherozeshah Mehta :—

"I may assure you that Horniman is as good an Indian as myself. During the days of the partition of Bengal, he used to walk with us bare-footed through the streets of Calcutta, with a shawl on his broad white shoulders."

Three decades have made no change in Horniman's attitude; he has marched on from strength to strength.

Horniman revolutionized the public life in Bombay. Before he arrived in the city, the chambers of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Sir Chimanlal Setalvad were the only centres of public activity. Vigorous, dynamic, public life was unknown and Bombay got inspiration, advice and drive from the new editor who wrested for her a paramount position in Indian politics.

The *Chronicle* was the first thing that the citizens began to read in the mornings. It supplied them their war cry. Thousands of readers were fascinated. The fascination lay in the editor's nationality. An Englishman in their camp meant someone braving the lion in his own den, and the English were having their own back with a vengeance! A radical outlook, a consciousness and feeling born of right and a ruthless exposure of evil were the dominant features of Horniman's writings. The Europeans reviled him, of course, and some big bureaucrat in Montagu-Chelmsford's party at Bombay put it bluntly:—"I hate Horniman though I can't help admiring his articles, which are a tonic." Goaded into fury, the authorities branded him a traitor to his Motherland!

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

The British journals in India voice the view of the British Raj and British planters and British magnates. The late Pat Lovett told the plain truth that "in its heart, Government still regards a free press as an unmitigated nuisance and an abomination in the sight of the Lord. The only journal it has any use for, is the sycophantic bugleman of its brave deeds and shining virtues." When Lord Willingdon laid the foundation stone of the offices of the *Statesman* at Calcutta in 1932, he complimented the Anglo-Indian paper for "its well-merited reputation as an independent newspaper, frank in its criticism, anxious to place facts fully and fairly before the public, ready at all times to lend its powerful support to a cause which it believes to be right and just." To block the country's progress towards freedom in every conceivable manner is the only "right and just cause" Anglo-Indian papers espouse! What would be the fate of the Indian papers which would be "anxious to place facts fully and fairly before the public?" His late Lordship did not condescend to expatiate on that aspect! It was not easy for Lord Willingdon to forget that the *Bombay Chronicle* and the *Hindu* had taken a severe and merciless account of his stewardship when he retired from the Governorships of Bombay and Madras respectively.

Horniman matched his craft against the cunning of the authorities. Instantly he started work in Bombay, he became the most powerful man in the city. He gave his enemies no chance! "They read every line I write," said this doyen of Indian journalism, in all humility to the present writer. "They read between the lines, and above them, underneath them and in all sorts of positions but they couldn't catch me. Lord Lloyd and his "secretariat gang" pored and pored over every *Chronicle* file until DORA came to their rescue and I was bundled off." The ex-Governor wanted to pin him down for sedition; but Horniman's knowledge of sedition and his mastery of the Indian Penal Code proved stronger than Lloyd's enthusiasm to trap him. He

## BENJAMIN GUY HORNIMAN

could write so well defying the law, yet not come within its clutches!

Horniman's articles on the Amritsar Massacre wore out the patience of the authorities. Public indignation was roused to an unparalleled degree, with the result that one fine morning in April 1919 the writer of the articles disappeared from the shores of India! The "Fourth Estate" gasped! Immediately after his deportation, Mahatma Gandhi issued a manifesto in which he said:—

"With great sorrow and equal pleasure I have to inform you that Government have today removed Mr. Horniman from Bombay. Mr. Horniman is a very brave and generous Englishman. He has given us the *mantram*, *liberty*. He has fearlessly exposed the wrong wherever he has seen it and thus has been an ornament to the race to which he belongs and rendered it a great service. Every Indian knows his services to India. I am sorry for the event because a brave Satyagrahi has been deported while I retain my political liberty the continuance of the *Chronicle* without Mr. Horniman would be like an attempt to sustain the body when the soul has departed. I can fully appreciate the deep wound that will be caused to every Satyagrahi by the separation of a brave comrade. The National cause will certainly feel hurt to find that one who presented it with a daily draught of liberty is no more in its midst. At a time like this Satyagrahis and others in my opinion demonstrate their true affection for Mr. Horniman by only remaining perfectly calm."

For nearly seven long years Horniman remained in exile from the land of his adoption. During his sojourn in England he carried on a vigorous campaign for India and flooded the British press and platform with Rowlatt Act wrongs in the Punjab and elsewhere; so much so that the British Cabinet was forced to make a declaration on India. It is significant that Churchill drafted an excellent formula defining in what circumstances firing could be resorted to on a crowd—an excellent formula by itself, but still more honoured in its breach than its practice in India.

Early in 1926, Horniman "defied the powers of darkness," by walking straight into India through Colombo and his journey from Dhanushkodi to Bombay was a triumphal power with ovations all the way. The bureaucrats seemed to take no notice of the magnificent welcome accorded to the hero of the day, for they deemed the "Public Danger" that he was seven years ago a mere extinct volcano! Some leading citizens actually waited on the Commissioner of Police, to stop the entry of Horniman in the city. Afterwards the same people ran with bouquets for him! The Horniman episode is a grim reminder of what fate awaits a candid, outspoken and fearless critic of the authorities, sworn to expose their wrongs.

"In all my forty years' experience, I haven't got into any trouble," narrated Horniman to the present writer, his steely blue eyes chuckling with cool triumph. "Once I was hauled up by a solicitor but in appeal I got off. The disappointed attorney went up to the Privy Council but failed—This tussle supplied a leading case for the chapter on defamation in the Indian Penal Code. During the world War II, the Bombay Government for once banned the publication of the *Bombay Sentinel*. Even recently the Defence of India Act was wide enough to hang Horniman and his paper was suspended. The public strongly protested and the Congress House never witnessed such an unparalleled demonstration in favour of a paper. Almost all the ten thousand workers of the Royal Indian Naval Dockyard were there. Everybody of every community was present to cry out "Long Live Horniman!" and "Long Live the *Bombay Sentinel*". The old, clever editor who ran past Dora on several occasions in his life, got away with it this time also. He addressed a letter to Government which was neither an apology nor a defence. It just reiterated a correct position. Government allowed the immediate republication of the paper and everybody was happy. Horniman was too much of a lawyer to be roped in by any regulation.

## BENJAMIN GUY HORNIMAN

Horniman's *forte* is not mere untrapped sedition; an unrivalled grasp of the law of defamation is also his asset. "As a journalist neither I nor anyone on my account has been convicted for defamation—though I have had to take many risks"—was not an empty boast in a land where at every corner a scribe is hauled up for sedition or defamation and gets gaoled. The history of the *Chronicle* after Horniman's deportation sheds lustre on its first editor. The paper under Marmaduke Pickthall had to pay thousands as damages and incur heavy expenses in the High Court for defence on a charge of defamation.

As the Editor of the *Bombay Sentinel*, Horniman became the *bete noire* of the Police for his dreadfully searching exposures of gambling in the city. He condemned the Police for their impotence in stamping out the evil. He was trapped in a raid, when investigating, and hauled up like an ordinary felon. He was collared by the neck by an Indian Police Sub-Inspector and abused (he later on got the 'sack!') which act of "politeness" was condemned by Sir Hormazdiar Dastur, the late Chief Presidency Magistrate in his judgment acquitting Horniman and the hundred and odd accused in the now famous "Sutta Gambling Case," wherein the veteran journalist figured as the first accused. Even the *Times of India*, ready to defend the Police on all and sundry occasions, found fault with its proteges on this occasion. Editorially, it demanded an enquiry and condemned Horniman's enterprise in running into the danger zone in the interests of journalism. "Journalists must be free from such tyranny," thundered the "Old Woman of Bori Bunder." Horniman had gone to a remote corner of the city, where a notorious gambling centre was situated to learn the fact for himself. He conducted his own defence and his brilliant cross-examination was the outstanding feature of the *cause celebre*. In a dozen signed articles, entitled "I accuse the Police", published after his acquittal, Horniman charged the Police of deli-

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

berately staging the whole "show" of the raid and mass arrests merely to trap and parade him before the public as a gambler—the preceptor of morals which he himself did not care to practise! Horniman's campaign and acquittal in this sensational case was another of his unforgettable triumphs as a journalist.

When Philip Spratt of the Meerut Conspiracy reputation was arrested and put up for trial before an Indian jury in the Criminal Sessions of the Bombay High Court in 1928, Horniman said that given an impartial trial on the merits of the case, no jury would give a verdict against the accused. Horniman's office was searched and he yielded up all the issues of the *Indian National Herald*, in which Spratt's articles on "India and China" appeared. The trial ended as Horniman predicted. Before the conclusion of the summing-up by the Acting Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, a British Civilian, garlands were ready for the accused. So sure was the anticipation of acquittal! The jury declared "NO," and the judge set the prisoner free. The series of articles as forwarded by the writer to the editor if published, would have made Spratt and Horniman jail-companions! But the hand of the master-journalist pruned and polished them up. Spratt's articles were published after they were shorn of their "seditious stuff" by the veteran editor. The C.I.D. pounced on the wrong man! They should have been more sure of the man who touched up the contribution with his peculiar genius. The police had to eat the humble pie in this case as well!

Until the Ordinances came, Horniman went on merrily and uninterrupted in his career of vigorous writings. Even after the Ordinances were ushered in, his amazing acquaintance with the implications of "proper legislation" and lawless laws that would put first-rate lawyers into the shade, kept him free from peril. Incidentally it is worth while noting that he mostly prefers to appear without a lawyer and always conducts his own cases. The present

writer has successfully defended Horniman in over a dozen cases, in some of which it appeared he wantonly and foully defamed parties who could not be exposed at the bar of public opinion in any other manner. They were really notorious public characters. Horniman is the last man to run away from a bad case by just resorting to a small technical trick. He would stand four-square and go the whole hog in his defence and fight every inch of the ground. His guts to face the worst criminal trials arising out of his editorial duties are something not found anywhere. He can boldly face the worst situation when even counsel lose their nerve. There were the cases of half a dozen city newspaper editors who were hauled up for the technical violation of an offence. They made a quick job of it all by tendering an "explanation" which was virtually an apology: but Horniman was a tough guy. He offered no apology and was even determined to teach a little law to the Magistrate! He had his way and went home a proud victor. As a client he is a proud possession; but he can provide you with the most exacting job. His persistence and unrivalled experience of the law courts make half the victory in his cases.

Horniman's "dread" of the ferocious Ordinance made him very careful in his writings. His articles showing up that the magistracy and the executive were allied agencies when Civil Disobedience raged in the early months of the year 1932, brought a crisis in the affairs of the *Indian Daily Mail*. A security of Rs. 6,000 was demanded and the paper suffering from long-standing financial depression had to close down. Horniman went back to the *Chronicle*. Again, his signed article on the Bombay riots of April 1932, censuring the authorities for their failure to curb *goondaism* when they were ever alert to stamp out political disturbances, brought down the wrath of the tin-gods! Another security was demanded. In vain, he appealed to the conscience of the authorities, and prominent members of the



British Parliament, stressing the moderation and fairness of his writings. The sweeping and ruthless powers of the Ordinances alone touch his invulnerability.

The Irish way of fighting the terror on newspapers is attractive. When by the end of 1914, the Sinn-Fein papers were suppressed, Arthur Griffith published a bi-weekly entitled *Scissors and Paste*. That indomitable Irish President's ingenious device of filling up the columns of his paper was to cull out extracts from anywhere—British, American, Colonial and other papers not on the banned list. Arthur Griffith's first editorial is illuminating:—

“It is high treason for the Irishman to argue with the sword the right of his small nationality to equal political freedom with Belgium or Servia or Hungary. It is destruction to the property of his printer now to argue it with his pen. Hence whilst England is fighting the battle of the small nationalities, Ireland is reduced to Scissors and Paste. Up to the present, the sale and the use of these instruments have not been prohibited by the British Government in Ireland.”

The Indian method of thwarting the designs of the tin-gods of bureaucracy is more ancient than the Irish device. *The Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, under the late Motilal Ghosh, known for dodging dangerous press measures was singled out for retribution. The introduction of the Vernacular Press Act meant the death-knell of the *Patrika*, then a vernacular daily; but it possessed the proverbial cats' lives! The law passed and the bureaucrats jubilant, left Motilal Ghosh not quite resourceless. The authorities were elated at the prospect of the paper being crushed out of existence. Holding a council of war, Motilal Ghosh transformed the paper overnight from a vernacular into an English daily. The Vernacular Press Act did not affect this reincarnation. Later, in 1920, Motilal Ghosh pursued different tactics to meet another menace. He disappointed the censors by writing articles on purely agricultural matter and dropping out all political “stuff”. The “benign benefactors of India”

love to talk of their concern for the teeming agricultural population. The *Patrika* provided them an excellent bill of fare!

Motilal Ghosh earned immortality for having defied Lord Curzon when the latter defamed India in his Calcutta University Convocation address by dubbing Indians as "liars, like the Cretans of old." The next morning, alongside the proud proconsul's declaration in the *Patrika* appeared extracts from his book on Eastern travels, wherein he referred to his being forced to utter a lie about his age in the presence of an elderly Japanese statesman lest his youthful looks would not command his respect as the Japanese tradition spurns the claim of those without grey-hairs!

Horniman's writings have been a whole flow of indignant but just words about the enslavement of the Eastern races by the Westerners, and the helotry of one individual by another. Anyone with a grievance extending from the care of canine creatures to the woes of rack-ridden tenants fails not to enlist his prompt and sympathetic pen in his favour. He is interested in all radical movements, neither actuated by that vulgar love of publicity nor by dramatic excitement. He believes that he has a mission to perform and his work bears it out. He feels a vast enthusiasm for the work of making other people his equals. He is profoundly English and would make everyone an Englishman's equal.

"Horniman has done the work of hundred leaders" said a prominent Congressman. His paper was the only Nationalist journal in the country that attacked the Nehru Report for its Dominion Status basis. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact he wanted to be consigned to the scrap heap. When Civil Disobedience visibly declined in 1933, the *Chronicle* under his editorship was the first Congress organ in the country demanding the withdrawal of the movement. The cry immediately echoed in the Nationalist press. "They have done all that I have stood for" was his just boast.

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

His sense of news is disconcerting to the opponent and carries with it the speed of wind. "If a dog bites a man it is not news," uttered Northcliffe, that giant of journalism, "but if a man bites a dog, it's news!" The present writer recalls having supplied Horniman with a bit of news when the Gandhi-Irwin negotiations were on. The other newspapers would not have it. Horniman lost not a second to flash the sensational story of the plot of the intended deportation of two hundred Congress leaders to Andamans. That was the beginning of the story of the "intended concentration of agators in Kuria Muria and Andaman Islands," which was taken up by other newspapers long after Horniman broadcast the information. There was a plot in the Secretariat, provincial or imperial, we do not know! It was scotched by its premature exposure.

Horniman's rule in journalism includes and dwarfs the career of a score of journalists. He is the teacher and master of over a dozen who have counted for anything in Indian journalism. The late Massingham of the *Nation* hailed him as "a journalist of distinction." The present writer remembers asking Sadanand, the most enterprising man in Indian journalism as to who in his opinion was the greatest Indian journalist and he unhesitatingly mentioned Horniman's name. Horniman's assistants and colleagues are now "pilots" in their own right. Syed Abdulla Brelvi, at the *Chronicle*, Pothan Joseph who edited *Hindustan Times* at the Imperial Capital, and now pilots the Muslim League *Dawn* there, the late Ranga Iyer in charge of the *Daily Herald* at Lahore and Syed Hussain trailing across the Dollar continent with his speeches and writings. Prabhu, Chandra, Kumthekar, Karai, Ezekiel, Kabadi, that brilliant young columnist Yooji, U. G. Rao, Shavakshah Sohrabji Kapadia, the bright young man efficiently editing the *Sunday Standard*, the son of old Sohrabji Kapadia, for years the editor of the Gujarati daily, the *Bombay Samachar*, a pioneer of vernacular journalism and several others.

## BENJAMIN GUY HORNIMAN

have acquired proficiency in their craft, and their work reflects credit on their master-craftsman.

Horniman's conflicts with newspaper proprietors and even with himself, when he was his own proprietor of a daily and a weekly—*The Herald*, have been throughout the result of his ever insisting too much on his rights:—

I must have liberty  
Withal, as large a charter as a wind,  
To blow on whom I please.

He has made and buried journals; and resurrections need burials. Game to the end, he seems to have plenty of luck in starting papers ending them and restarting them again in their characteristic vigour. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta was the only one who could control him. His influence gone, Horniman's defiance increased. He is just the man whom Aristophanes picture, "A lion is not to be reared within the state. But once you have reared him up, consult his every mood." Mahatma Gandhi once wrote to Horniman that newspapers were a nuisance and that he would dissuade anyone from starting a new one if he could. As a journalist Horniman has, perhaps, been the only one in India who won and lost fortunes connected with newspapers. Money flies away from his hands like wine wrecklessly poured out from a cellar. Misfortune once frowned on him and the Insolvency Court provided him the shelter. Notwithstanding, he has always kept his head erect, unruffled by the smiles and frowns of fortune. The great Bismark, when a school boy, jumped in a stream to save himself from the clutches of his creditors. Leine, thus became a famous bathing stream in Germany. But Horniman has neither been moved with despair by the worst of circumstances nor actuated with an ambition to leave marks of fame on any earthly spot.

Whenever honours are showered on him he humbly passes by. The anti-Willington agitation initiated by him resulting in the smashing up of the proposal to accord a

farewell when Willingdon relinquished the Governorship of Bombay, was his first victory as a journalist. The anti-Willingdon committee which wanted to raise a memorial to commemorate this notable agitation offered Horniman to associate his name with it. He humbly declined the honour, which went exclusively to Jinnah, resulting in the shape of the Jinnah Peoples' Memorial Hall. Horniman's contemporary British journalists who came out to India penniless starting at the bottom, now flourish on the fat of the land, with knighthoods and big emoluments to boot. But the son of the ex-Pay-Master-in-Chief of the British Royal Navy could for the sake of his ideals afford to remain poor, unpurged by any kind of ambition except to serve the interests of the land of his adoption.

Horniman has been ever moved by that kind of calm, which cannot be blighted either by defeats or failures. Fate played several rude tricks on him but he always presented a smiling front. According to Homer's test he is really a fortunate man for "those may be thought to fare best whose fortunes inclined now one way and now another." He has about him that grand and elevated manner which comes from the habit of facing life with odds against him.

Landor in one of his brilliant sayings told Emerson that "a great man should make great sacrifices and kill his hundred oxen, without knowing whether they would be consumed by gods and heroes or whether the flies would eat them." Horniman scatters the rich fruits of his labours, right and left; though a great man he is heedless to warnings and allows the flies to eat them away. He will ruthlessly "kill the hundred oxen" gifts of devoted friends and admirers, with flies ever ready to devour them. His chronic weakness has been to wage a savage and relentless war against the gifts of friends lavished on him.

No truer truth was uttered than when Voltaire wrote that "fate is temperament." Horniman, throughout, has

been governed by his temperament which made him and unmade him on several occasions. Temperament created several crises in his career. He became, at once, the proud master and pitiless slave of his temperament. It is also a factor that has invested him with a uniqueness of strength unknown to a majority of men. No glittering prize, no money, no position, not even the terror of starvation would steer him away from a course dictated by principle. On matters of principle he is simply immovable. Not all the fume and fury of Pandit Motilal, nor all the maligning of Srinivas Iyengar that "foreigners were not needed for our salvation," could divert Horniman from the stand once taken on the Independence issue when he attacked the basis of the Nehru Report. India first, last and for all the time, is the maddening passion that rules every word his pen pours out.

A militant teetotaller and vegetarian,—that has perhaps supplied him with that iron tenacity of conviction to his work. He is in the company of Gandhi, Shaw, Edison and Besant. "Vegetables hold the secret of long life" is a bright Shavian saying, and the Bombay apostle of this creed gathers strength from it. Horniman is unlike other newspaper men who would preach prohibition and accept all the fat advantages of the advertising revenue from drinks.

Some unkind critics say that the sting from Horniman's pen is now gone! They forget that he can still infect the man in the street with a fighting feeling for his rights and enthusiasm for causes that must always live. He can still stir up dead and vanished things into life through the medium of his written and spoken word. Lost causes will always find in him their gallant defender. He applies to the entire mankind the British cry that they never shall be slaves! May his tribe increase!





MUKUNDRAO R. JAYKAR





## MUKUND RAMRAO JAYAKAR

A slip sent for a formal signature evoked an immediate, insistent call from the 'chief' poring over his speeches or briefs. The job could have been finished in an instant; but who provided for an immediate call? With a burdened mind, doubtful of what kind of reception awaited him, the present writer walked into the chambers of the great M.R.J. "Hullo Alwe! Please sit down. I am extremely pleased to see you"—with this exceedingly cordial greeting all doubts forthwith vanished—as the grand Round Tabler and Peace Maker presented a picture of perfect manners. "You are taking extraordinary interest in labour," sprang the next disarming question. "Well! How is your constituency? Let's have a roving chat." The writer smarted under a perplexity. "You are mistaking me for *Alwe*," I put in; he is locked up in the Meerut Conspiracy Case. I am *Alva*." The politician's mistake was confounding as all the world noisily rang with the names of the accused in the Meerut Conspiracy trial.

"Don't you remember me, Mr. Jayakar"; it was an unpleasant reminder the writer had to give. "I was that young man who gave you some trouble at the Indian Christian meeting you addressed on the eve of your election to the Assembly." That finished me! Jayakar who till then was beaming with smiles, smiles, and nothing but smiles now frowned and frowned and frowned! The entire colour of his countenance changed; the formal signature was speedily scribbled. Prolonging the interview, started under the finest auspices, seemed to be a veritable agony. A forcible reminder of that stormy meeting, when rowdy scenes were witnessed, caused my abrupt exit from Mr. Jayakar's chambers. He who had warmly shaken hands with me at the outset lost no time in resorting to the national style of

greeting of raising his folded hands and conveying a sort of "you better go away" feeling!

Jayakar grew bitter as soon as he recollected a stormy disagreement. Contradiction at first astonished him; then it positively antagonised him. His innate culture prevented him from being rude or violent; but he was frigid and stiff from the severity of his eyes. His aristocratic detachment barred him from transforming the High Court chambers into a duelling ground. "With him politeness is not a quality of mind, but a weapon of attack. He is deliberately calm."

To return to the stormy adventure of a few Xavierites, representative of every community and responsible in exposing Mr. Jayakar's attitude towards his fellow-Responsivist, the late Mr. Joseph Baptista, the St. Xavier's College Magazine sarcastically referred to our enthusiasm:—

"Mr. Jayakar, one of our best well-known students, survived the fierce onslaught made on him by no less a person than a budding orator of St. Xavier's. Youth must sow its wild oats."

We youngsters printed handbills condemning Mr. Jayakar's failure to support his colleague. We demanded explanation from the Responsivist chief and none was tendered though he elegantly discoursed on nationalism. We asked the then Thakurdwar politician as to how he came to support Dr. Paranjpe, a rival candidate for the University seat as against the Vice-President of the Responsive Co-operation Party. Report had it that Jayakar furious with St. Xavier's College authorities for tolerating one of its students to censure him in public, took his revenge by stopping his annual donation. He must have been overjoyed when the present writer was expelled from the College on a midnight—with his anti-Jayakar speech as one of the twin counts of indictment. The Baptista-Paranjpe episode needs a lot of explanation from Mr. Jayakar. Baptista wrote three stinging letters to Mr. Horniman's

*Indian National Herald*, charging his chief with political impropriety. He prefaced his remarks with an unforgettable introductory para:—

“Politics was for me a labour of love for the poor people who bore the burdens of the day without reaping the fruits of their labour partly on account of capitalist concupiscence and partly on account of foreign domination. But the graduates of Bombay have dug such a nice political grave for me that I am tempted to sleep therein the sleep of the just, but I fear my sleep will be disturbed unless I first do justice to my political friends and foes.”

*Bharati*, the *Herald's* composer of verses (the pen name of brilliant Denis Gonsalves, who alas is no more!) humorously dilating on the defeat wrote:—

You must have read that nice Election yarn  
Which Baptist has been spinning in the *Herald*  
Of how he came out as an also-ran,  
Thanks to his Chief and sponsor, M. R. Jerrold.

It doubtless makes a most beguiling story  
How Baptist thinking M. R. J. in vogue  
Thought here's splendid run of Council glory  
And got instead trapped by that naughty rogue.

You see they hit it off: quite a good barter.  
“You get the Hindu votes, I'll get you Chris'uns”  
And Baptist knowing not he'd caught a Tartar,  
Marched on his wide and persuasive missions.

And when the dreaded hour of battle struck  
And Baptist's fate was hanging in the balance,  
How do you think the Leader set to work?  
He champed the bit and laughed with great nonchalance.

It was even rumoured that he played B. false,  
That he sent B. to the battle to be buried,  
That he would not respond to B.'s dying calls  
The Arch-Responder whom B. had understudied.

'Twas also said the Poona Wrangler got  
All mortal help from this new Judas Jerrold  
All votes were cast into the Poona slot,  
And that's what B. is writing in *The Herald*.

“Kaka” Baptista wound up:—“I expected that the President would gratefully inscribe on my political tombstone:—“*Sic transit gloria Vice-Presidentis R.I.P. Amen.*”

*Pace “Kaka”!* Mr. Jayakar, since 1921 became “a fast rising young man,” when he agreed to hoist the flag of Non-Co-operation and swore by the creed of the triple boycott. He made a grand bonfire of his best foreign tweeds and donned pure khaddar. He gave up his practice and went to enquire into the Jallianwalla Massacre. He donated Rs. 25,000 to the Congress funds. Then he passed on to the Swaraj Party. The year 1924 made him a Responsive Co-operator, though the Responsivist rocket fell down like a damp squib. The Round Table Conference saw him a Liberal, though on the eve of his departure to Yeravda on his Peace mission to the Mahatma in 1930, he threatened to “go back to 1921,” if the nationalist demand was not conceded. At the end of his political peregrination, Jayakar found repose in the constitutional bosom of the “Independent” Sapru!

Jayakar conveys the impression that he cannot stand the strain of one, undivided allegiance. Time was when he sat at the feet of the Mahatma, but now he dons the purest *videshi* stuff, lunches and dines at the Viceroy’s House and partakes without any qualm of conscience of gubernatorial hospitality. Time was when Jayakar dined eight times in the week with Jamnadas Mehta but now they will not even look at each other. It is a sight to see them sitting on the same platform and not exchanging a single word! Likewise Jayakar bore antipathy to the late Vithalbhai Patel and the other Congress bosses ruling the City of Bombay.

Mukund Ramrao Jayakar is a supersensitive figure flitting in the arena of our politics. Proud, oversensitive, and an extremely good hater. A shirker of criticism, he can work only in an atmosphere of admiration. He never loves a fight and when it is forced on him he longs to be out of it. The trouble with him is that he has neither the grit to push

forward unmindful of the "hits" nor the ability to wrest the crown! If Jayakar had gone like Maxim Gorki, when young and fresh with literary triumphs to seek solace in his troubles from Korolenko, the then best known writer of Russia, his Mentor would have told him:—"If anyone pushes himself forward a little he is bound to get hit on the head." Our friend's efforts end in his getting bruised and "hit on the head" without the compensating comforts in its train. When his pride is affronted, he wraps himself up in a sheet of sensitiveness. Jayakar's mind is all placidity and equanimity. It is only when he unburdens his soul of its miseries that one can "read his mind like a manuscript."

You will ever find him complaining that people misrepresent his motives and give him no credit for his patriotism!

"If I run down to Poona, they say, I am out for an Executive Councillorship, and if I go to New Delhi they say I have gone after a membership of the Viceroy's Cabinet. The report of the offer of the Judgeship with an eventuality of the Chief Justiceship of Bombay, they said, emanated from my brain. What am I to do?"

was the string of his grievances to a meeting of students. It is a pity that Jayakar was not a contemporary of Demosthenes to get the benefit of his instruction. He would have been a happier man had he been fortified with the advice of the greatest orator of all time. When young fellows sought enlightenment from Demosthenes, "he would try to deter them from public life, saying that if two roads had been presented to him in the beginning, one leading to the bema and the assembly, and the other straight to destruction, and if he could have known beforehand the evils attendant on a public career, namely, fears, hatreds, calumnies and contentions, he would have taken that road which led directly to death."

Jayakar does not like the idea of following where others lead. He must change his nature in order to be led. He

will never brook the idea of playing the shadow to any substance! He can overlook all where only his celebrated colleague, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru is concerned. Sapru's presence is indispensable to the picture. He would not mind having things on a fifty-fifty basis as long as he was in the picture. He has dreamt and thought of himself in conjunction with his friend as the saviour of the country from the throes of anarchy—the consolidator of the East and the West, a consummate tamer of the wild beasts that calmed down the lion and laid it beside the lamb! He must have revelled in the knowledge as to how a word here, a comma there, how his crossing the t's and dotting the i's in all those protracted negotiations must have revolutionised the aspect of nature itself!

This alliance has survived together through good and evil report. Sunder them not, for their fame and fortune are bound up with their alliance. The Yeravda Jail conversations of 1930 threw them in double harness on the stage. They have been running like a pair of ponies and it would be difficult to see how their minds have worked. An intimate chat between Sapru and Jayakar would intrigue and baffle the ingenuity of Landor himself. Improved upon Boswell's it would run:—"Sir, you have only two subjects, yourself and me, and I am heartily sick of both."

Mukund Ramrao Jayakar having rubbed shoulders with Pandit Motilal in the Punjab Wrongs Enquiry Committee and made a sacrifice of his practice at the Bar thought that he was entitled to lead the Swarajist forces on the passing away of the great Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das. The transfer of the crown from Burra Bazaar to "Anand Bhuwan," instead of to Thakurdwar, was unpalatable to him. In Jayakar's calculation, Pandit Motilal was in equal harness with him. Some Cassius seemed to have prompted in his ears,

Why should that name be sounded more than yours?  
Write them together, yours is as fair a name;

## MUKUND RAMRAO JAYAKAR

Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well.  
Weigh them, it is as heavy.....

Jayakar would have rebelled immediately after the body of the celebrated Deshabandhu turned into ashes on the Calcutta Burning Ghat; but he bided with saving grace to turn fiercely upon the man who he thought had elbowed him out of the leadership of the Swaraj Party. The test of merit and sacrifice was overlooked. He would never calculate what had outdone him in the race for leadership. The mantle of Das rightly fell on the patrician shoulders of the Kashmir-cum-Allahabad Pandit instead of the Thakurdwar-cum-Malabar Hill politician, versed in shastras and vedanta culture. "You cannot be in the middle of the ladder," expatiated Jayakar in an address to the Bombay law students. "Before long you must be at the top or you must be down for all time." That revealed his strength and chronic weakness. He detested the idea of humbly receiving the *hookums* from Allahabad. The Swarajist creed was not, to him, an article of faith which could be denied only on peril of damnation. Affronted and deeply resentful of the transfer of power, he bucked and galloped into the Responsivist wilderness—though no doubt, restored to his natural state, when he and his friends without much loss of time marched into the Circean fields, hapless victims of glittering ribands, sinecures, lunches and dinners. The road to the highest judicial appointment in the Empire, the Membership of the Privy Council, was then an easy run.

Jayakar is obsessed with the feeling that he would win by restraint and moderation, though reverses are pitifully strewn all the way. He has walked into Whitehall and Viceregal Lodge not to learn, instruct and improve but to inwardly pine and repent. Yet he would wallow in moderation and prate of conference and conciliation. His *forte* is his eternal optimism—a wreck of the brightest promises of his early political career. Scratch his language of extre-



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

mism, and you would find beneath the layer a mass of moderatism. At the R.T.C. he declared that he was one of those who had faced odium and unpopularity because he wanted to give Britain the last chance of settling the political question by the method of conference and negotiation. There are other measures known to India but he was one of those who thought it was a sacred duty to give Britain this last chance. Then he assumed a threatening tone, which vanished at the end of the speech.

“If you do not give us what we demand do you realise the consequences in India? . . . without seeming to use threatening language you will have deliberately handed over the country to forces of disorder and chaos and it may be revolution.”

He concluded philosophising that God's ways are inscrutable. “Sir, perhaps, the way to freedom for India lies through revolution.” The same speaker rebuked Pandit Motilal for “his vapid *mantram* of Independence” and gloried in 1930 that he had “long ceased to be a Congressman!”

Jayakar's conduct *apropos* the Simon Commission was frankly exasperating. He first presented his case against the “Unwanted Commissioners” in a speech of classic brilliance, but he subsequently made a mistake of judgment, bordering on reaction. After stirring a Bombay boycott demonstration into unprecedented enthusiasm by his peroration that “the Simon Commissioners hadn't the ghost of a chance for toleration in this country as India's soul was not dead!” he tabled a motion in the Assembly that the Commission would be acceptable if certain modifications were made. Jayakar powerfully reminds us of that Glasgow elder who after denouncing the Union of Churches, withdrew his opposition with such disconcerting language:—“I think the scheme unconstitutional, impracticable, irreligious, illogical, ill-conceived, indeed absolutely idiotic but there's no doubt it's God's will !”

Essentially moderate in his mental outlook, training and experience, Jayakar unsuccessfully strove to run forward. It was fashionable to embrace extremism and he breathed fire for some time. The moment he realised that extremism meant serious business he dropped out of it and developed into a "responsible statesman." Having deserted the standard, he offered allegiance to less onerous, exacting duties. Jayakar's moderation is of that perfect species given expression to by that printer in Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* when political realities started him in the face on different occasions:—

"We shall proceed with the greatest moderation, Doctor. Moderation is always my aim; it is the greatest virtue in a citizen, at least I think so.

"And if only we proceed with moderation, I cannot imagine that there will be any risk.

"But if I am to be accused of timidity and inconsistency in my principles, this is what I want to point out; my political past is an open book. I have never changed, except perhaps to become a little moderate, more moderate. My heart is still with the people; but I don't deny that my reason has a certain bias towards the authorities.

"And now, as I am in this position, I should like to say a few brief words. I am a quite and peaceable man, who believes in discreet moderation . . . and . . . and . . . in moderate discretion. All my friends can bear witness to that."

Jayakar belongs to that group of our politicians who have deliberately elevated adulation and evasion to the standard of a principle. They have refined this business and cloaked it with honour and self-respect. His culture has made him ferociously exclusive, which has often led him into the commission of the two deadliest sins of politics—"to skulk and retire." When everyone condemned the bureaucratic bungling in the Bardoli No-Tax Campaign, Jayakar kept mum. He must have deemed his self-effacing neutrality as political wisdom of the highest order; but it was a

silence that was not dignified. He repressed the urge for battle and caused injustice to the brave peasants of Bardoli—the backbone of a downtrodden people.

However, Jayakar's tongue is his saviour. He is one who "by pleasing speeches and good words seduces the hearts" of the weak-minded. He flits across the Indian political stage like a siren with the aid of his smooth tongue. He is the subtlest temper of our public life. A line from Drayton's couplet is revealing:—

"The subtlest tempter hath the smoothest style."

Jayakar's eloquence is very pleasant and possesses the greatest charm—qualities that distinguished the oratory of Cicero. The late President Woodrow Wilson before he walked into the White House contemplated in the solitude of his University study upon the great British political figures. Drawing his conclusions on the oratory of John Bright he observed that "eloquence lies in the thought, not in the throat.....thought is the fibre, thought is the pith of eloquence—it consists not in sonorous sound or brilliant phrases." Judged by Woodrow Wilson's canon, Jayakar's eloquence springs out of his "throat," though his sonorous, brilliant phrases fascinate the audience.

However, there is no talent so catastrophic on memorable occasions as eloquence under cold and deliberate command. Jayakar's famous *Nothing Less, Nothing More* speech at the All-Parties Conference at Calcutta in December 1928 pronounced the final verdict on his statesmanship. That mischievous, destructive speech blasted pure nationalism, and the subsequent history of communal relations proved to be the distressing wreckage of hopes and expectations. His *Nothing Less, Nothing More* slogan paved the way for ex-Premier MacDonald's Communal Award. He may be proud that he made a statesmanlike utterance at the Convention but his pathetic oratorical triumph buried joint electorates. "You cannot remove a comma," declared this

communalist-cum-nationalist leader, "you cannot remove even a dot from this agreement." Proud and overbearing Jinnah, almost on bended knees, made a passionate plea before the assembly to amend the Nehru Report and grant the Muslim demand of one-third reservation of seats in the Central Legislature. Sapru rose to the occasion, and free as he is from the communal complex, exhorted and pressed for conceding the demand. Gandhi and Motilal were kept busy outside the convention. The Nehru Report was thus torpedoed by the communalist clique, when the 'big guns' of the Congress were away exhausting their artillery on the futile issue of Dominion Status vs. Independence. The cultured Mahasabhaite ultimately afforded the opportunity to a set of reactionary Muslims to betray our noblest cause. Pakistan was then only a shadow; subsequently it became a battle cry!

Jayakar's obstinacy and Moonje's ruthlessness launched the malevolent bark of Muslim communalism in the turbulent streams of Indian politics. Jayakar pleaded no wise cause. He pressed forward with his course and decided the issue outright. What Jayakar was not prepared to grant that fatal day of December 1928, he must be prepared to give today! He now wrings his hands in despair and invokes heaven's vengeance on the traitors and wrong-doers. The opportunity for an enduring alliance was gone as he pathetically failed to rise to the occasion and gloried in a transient rhetorical feat leaving bitterness in its train. "In the name of justice and fair mindedness," Sir Samuel Hoare and Ramsay MacDonald gave away more than what Jinnah Co. then pleaded from Jayakar and his friends!

The tragedy of Jayakar's career is that he has missed his true vocation. He would have been a great educator had he exclusively devoted his time to the training of youth. Early in his career he was associated with the foundation of a High School, which is now a flourishing institution, Jayakar was once the idol of youth of Bombay; now he is

an ostracised god. He is one of our few politicians who can talk most entertainingly on any subject other than politics. His knowledge could be crammed within the pages of an encyclopaedia. A connoisseur of art, Jayakar's sense of the beautiful is the distinguished trait of his artistic nature. He transports the artistic sense in all his activities, especially when he is on his legs. Small wonder his speeches at times soar to heights of the beautiful unattained by other wielders of the tongue. He lives in his new house at Malabar Hill where art is displayed in every nook and corner. A magnificent host, all the famed figures of Indian politics, Deshbandhu Das, Pandit Motilal and several others have been his right royal guests; but when he shifted from his humbler mansion of Thakurdwar to that of the present one at Malabar Hill the fire-eating giants vanished and other guests walked in like the Chief Justice of India, Sir Maurice Gwyer. His virtue of hospitality wipes off many of his weaknesses. As the Right Honourable Judge of His Majesty's Privy Council he would have warmly entertained even a poor town pleader, when a town sub-judge may have only after great condescension hospitably treated that poor creature of a lawyer! As a genuine admirer of art, his residence is resplendent with mural paintings of students to whom he has generously accorded his cultured patronage. A lover of music, he daily devotes an hour to the Muse. What an exquisite player he is on the indigenous musical instruments! When he softly handles his instruments, he will run into domains where "treasons, stratagems and spoils" never raise their heads. He will sing away his cares and censures thrown at him with music thus providing his excellent refuge.

"Music is a weapon by which you can build unity in India. We talk of pacts, of joint electorates and reservation of seats in the legislatures, but here we have a joint electorate where everyone of us can work. Here is a science where the Hindu and Mahomeddan have been working together for centuries. I think in the India to come, in the Free India to come—I hope it will come in course of

## MUKUND RAMRAO JAYAKAR

time even if the White Paper or Black Paper is passed—music will play a very important part in bringing about the cultural unity of India”

these were Jayakar's eloquent words as the President of a Music Conference. He reminded the Communities that the pious Kabir drew the religious homage of both Hindus and Muslims.

As a devotee of art, Jayakar is methodical in his work either when he handles a brief or runs his election campaign. Systematical and methodical throughout, this habit has been ingrained in him through his love for art. There are no odd and loose ends hanging about his work. Order and system reign everywhere. He will have much to teach his fellow-politicians in establishing the rule of order.

Jayakar has had too many personal tragedies in his life. The late Mrs. Jayakar who passed away over fifteen years ago was a devoted wife, of a charitable disposition. The death of his good wife removed the steadfast anchor of his life and left him adrift. Jayakar's political life may have been quite different had that good woman survived. His only son, no doubt, is an ornament of the British Royal Air Force; but it would have gladdened the heart of his proud father had he followed him in his political footsteps in Hindustan.

Mukund Ramrao Jayakar is destined to leave no indelible impression on our politics. His vacillation and intellectual isolation have made him a stranger to the masses. He basks in solitary grandeur and scarcely touches the fringe of popular feeling. His sensitiveness, sense of superiority and intolerance of criticism have gone a long way to make him one of the least endearing personalities of public life. People admire him a lot but he does not get himself endeared to them. He dazzles in the cut and thrust of debate but writhes under the storm and stress of public life. He will serve as a warning to men of his kind. .Morley

## **MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN**

wrote of Gladstone that "the man was infinitely greater than the orator." Any audience will acknowledge Jayakar as one of the finest speakers in India. It is a delight and a veritable charm to hear him speak; but few will affirm that the politician is greater than the splendidly suave, polished speaker in him.



**MAHOMED ALI JINNAH**





## MAHOMED ALI JINNAH

**"B**OMBAY will be another Boston," clamoured the stormy petrel of Gray's Inn in the opening years of the century; "next time tea chests won't be chucked into the sea but cart-loads of live Britishers." Mahomed Ali Jinnah's political career is one of the great personal tragedies of modern politics. The dashing young man who warned his legal fellow-diners that night of the "Indian Peril," whom Gokhale hailed as "the finest ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity" and afterwards made the Bombay public crazy about him for smashing a "popular farewell" to Lord Willingdon, was later on required to be sharply reminded by Lord Sankey, that he, the Chairman of the Round Table Conference was a better lover of India than this "lost leader" of Indian nationalism as his allegiance to his country was sacrificed for his community. The great hope of nationalism entertained in the period of the anti-Willingdon agitation vanished into thin air. For long the darling of nationalist India, his name now stinks in the nostrils of full-blooded nationalists. "Once I was known to be the purest nationalist but no one can be a genuine nationalist who does not recognise the claims of his community," with these words he wiped off the memory of his daring speech before the budding barristers of Gray's Inn. When his past is thrown back at him to remind him of the evil days his politics have fallen upon, Jinnah feebly answers in the language of Octavius Caesar, who replied to Mark Antony when the latter called him by an old contemptuous surname:—"I am surprised that my former name should be made a subject of reproach." The end is unlike the beginning!

Born a slave to fame, that fleeting fortune has deluded Mahomed Ali Jinnah. His individualism forced him to

throw to the winds the finest impulses created and nourished by nationalism in his youth. Maurice Barres, when he was scarcely twenty-five, amazed Paris as the arch propagator of *le culte du Moi*—a cult until then unknown to the gay Gallic race. Jinnah has assiduously cultivated that which Barres assigned as the title of his first three novels. This “implied the cultivation as well as the adoration of the Ego.” Jinnah actively initiated and systematised this cult through his earliest triumph associated with popular victories. The religion of *La Patrie* in Jinnah’s career is a glorified *Moi* writ large. “At the root of Jinnah’s activities is ambition,” observed a cold weather visitor to this country a decade ago. Ambition which is simultaneously existent and parallel to the devotion of his “*le culte du Moi*” spurred him from his youth to a career that ultimately clashed with national interests. “My Fourteen Points or Nothing!” “Pakistan or Nothing!” Jinnah’s “ego-worship” wears the mask of enlightened individualism; but unmasked it is a crude type of selfishness—at the most elevated to a science of uplift for his people. A strong individualist and dominating personality, Jinnah is a difficult man to work with. If you want him with you, you must put him at the top. Shorn of ambiguous language, it means that you must make him a leader. He will not be with you in any other capacity. He will prefer to eat his heart away in the wilderness and retire into frigid silence than play second-fiddle to anybody. It was his colossal vanity that made him declare that he would enter British Parliament “in the interests of his country!” Were there not other men who stormed Whitehall with the cries of their oppressed countrymen—the “Grand Old Man of Indian Politics,” the late Dadabhai Naoroji, from whom Jinnah acquired the rudiments of politics by being his Private Secretary at the threshold of his career; and Shapurjee Saklatwalla who so valiantly fought the battles of his country on the floor of the House? Jinnah hoped to succeed where others failed!

"I want to be in London and enter Parliament, where I hope to wield some influence," was his vainglorious speech. "There I shall meet British statesmen on a footing of equality. They will be accessible to me, not in the sense that I shall seek them and beg for interviews. They will want me and I shall want them more!"

The bubble burst! Willingdon left Jinnah out of the third Round Table Conference and the Joint Parliamentary Committee. Much wooing and no constituency available! The British electorate gave short shrift to his vaunting ambitions.

Though egotistic, Jinnah is strangely cordial. In all quarters he commands respect but does not ask for affection. Handsome and well-groomed, obviously careful to cut a distinguished figure, he loves a fine appearance and lays emphasis on sartorial perfection. The whole line of Viceroys, Harding and Chelmsford, and Reading and Halifax and Willingdon, all admired Jinnah as "the best dressed gentleman they ever met in India." You may not have seen Jinnah all your life but you will forthwith spot the *Jinnah* sartorial vogue! It has remained unmatched from the time a brilliant young man shot up as the cynosure of all eyes in the form of "the most elegant and finely trimmed young fellow in the Viceroy's Council!" You can be sure that he will always preserve his air of frigid importance and accustomed poise which sometimes degenerates into an arrogant pose.

Jinnah spoke the plain truth when he said in one of his most acrimonious, controversial speeches that "he bore no malice to anyone despite political differences." He was even a bit autobiographical for that matter.

"I went into the chambers of Sir George Lowndes a penniless man. He was to me like a father and treated me as a son. When he was in the Imperial Legislative Council as the Law Member to the Government of India, I bitterly opposed him. Withal, we have maintained our friendship unbroken till this day.....Pandit Motilal and I used to

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

fight like a pair of wild cats on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. Yet on the same evening of our altercation, he used to dine sumptuously with my wife, at my cost."

Mahomed Ali Jinnah's cordiality, probity and integrity are unquestioned. His personality though dominating retains captivating touches. Popular amongst young men, he has a weakness for patronizing them.

Jinnah, like Parnell, is no orator but can easily shine as one of the most effective speakers in any assembly of men. Without peer, he has been the ablest debator the Assembly ever had. A polished debator, with a remarkable gift of clear statement, he used to attract a big house and shine in any debate. His speeches neither soar to heights nor sound the depths. He will tell you a plain, unvarnished tale, neither underestimating nor overestimating it. There is neither rhetoric, passion nor emotion in his speeches—there is too much of logic and commonplace matter in it. The substance of his speeches is plain to the point of homeliness. He speaks in oracles—by fits and starts. He would periodically dole out his political wisdom. Now he would speak, and then preserve silence for a considerable length of time. Jinnah held his peace when everyone shouted himself hoarse on the rumour of the appointment of an all "white" Simon Commission. With its definite announcement, he made up his mind and took an unequivocal stand. He did not toss to and fro like other friends. Jinnah's adamant attitude contributed not a little in breaking the back of the Simon co-operators. His reserve could be well depicted by the simile of the Russian novelist, Alexander Kuprin, that "he possessed the ability of a camel, of nourishing himself for the future, for several weeks ahead; and then eating nothing for a month."

Jinnah does not pretend to know many things. His mind can encompass a few subjects. In fact, he once claimed the knowledge of only two subjects on earth—Law and Politics. He frankly admitted he did not know any-

thing else. The twin subjects have devoured all his attention and energy. He simply does not find time for anything else, though he has now laid aside Law. He prefers to shine in ignorance and let others become masters of spheres, wherein he has no interest. The present writer was taken aback when once during an interview Jinnah turned round and asked as to who Cardinal Newman was? He, however, sins in good company. Clemenceau also exhibited similar ignorance. "Who is Freud?...Has he written a book?" 'The Tiger' ventured in the "nether world of the soul!"

Strangely allied with Jinnah's ego-worship, is a mind that is logic mad! Since Gandhi launched his "illegal activities" Jinnah simultaneously and systematically studied logic and dinned its first principles on every audience. To him, unconstitutional agitation is the violation of every known canon of logic. It should not exist either by the rules of Deduction or Induction. It gets on Jinnah's nerves to see that logic is so much defied rather than constituted an authority. "After Civil Disobedience, what next?" was his favourite query in the old days. Jinnah's love of logic is like that of the Englishman, who as Emerson describes would "kiss the dust before a fact....In politics they put blunt questions, which must be answered; who is to pay the taxes? What will you do for trade? What for corn? What for the spinner?" Jinnah ever sought refuge under a barrage of questions. Queries have quieted the qualms of his conscience. He buries his ostrich-head in a mass of logic. "What next? If constituted authority is to be overthrown what will happen to the country?" was his old query. Jinnah's "whats" and "whys" ran to his rescue. That Russian novelist, Feodor Vasilievich Gladkov effectively answered Jinnah's kind in his *Cement* :—

"Do questions ever reveal the soul of man? Are answers to them ever convincing or true? There are no right questions and no true answers. Truth is that which questions do not invoke and it cuts right across all answers, having its own direction."

Mahomed Ali Jinnah gave the battle-cry of Pakistan for the Muslims though he did not previously lead the host. Having been swept off by the vainglory of his "Fourteen Points," he amazingly developed an extraordinary aptitude of standing up for the rights of his community. Instead of leading the communalist Muslims, ultimately he allowed himself to be led by them. They dragged him and put him at their head. They swore by his famous testament but would never consent to be ruled by his interpretation of it. Such is the tragedy of his famous "Fourteen Points"! He simply could not stand the whirlwind after having sowed the wind. To tamper with the "Points" or dilute Pakistan was to touch the Ark of the Covenant of Muslim Reaction. It was like touching the Corn Laws in the eyes of the Tories in the fifties of the last century or like violating the Unemployment benefit in the eyes of the Trade Union leaders in 1931. "Aristotle possessed thirteen slaves and, therefore, had exactly thirteen arguments for the righteousness of slavery." It is difficult to reconcile the great philosopher's ethics with his defence of slavery when he wrote:—"Slavery is a law of nature which is advantageous and just." Mahomed Ali Jinnah will put forth all his skill and logic to defend his now defunct "Fourteen Points" and his hybrid Pakistan. The Jinnah of the "Fourteen Points" and of Pakistan fame was the very same Jinnah who once hotly pursued his co-religionists in the Assembly and let himself go:—

"Do you want concessions? I don't want them. It is no good appealing to the Hindus. Seventy Millions of Muslims are a power in the country and you can dictate to the Government and to the Hindus. Let us show a manly attitude."

The trouble was that the seventy millions developed into a hundred millions and the demand of one-third representation for the Muslims was magnified into fifty-fifty basis! Jinnah may have rendered invaluable services to British Imperialism by his obstinate attachment to his "Fourteen Points" and Pakistan. Hindu-Muslim unity may have been

shattered by his obstructionist conduct. John Bull may thus have been fattened by these differences and got another golden chance to tighten his grip on us.

Lord Willingdon never forgave Jinnah the greatest affront offered him when he retired from the Governorship of Bombay. Jinnah committed the unforgiveable crime of organising the "notorious anti-Willingdon agitation." How could the ex-Viceroy forget that chapter of bitter memories that marred his departure from Bombay?

If I can catch him once upon the hip,  
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.

Not all the amiability, charm, diplomacy and sweetness of Lady Willingdon could avert that disaster created by Horniman-Jinnah-Sobhani trio at the Bombay Town Hall! A people's affection for the hero of that agitation and the remembrance of that popular triumph took the shape of the Jinnah People's Memorial Hall, situated in the Bombay Congress House. The Jinnah Hall is a standing refutation of the saying that "no prophet is honoured in his country." That one token of public triumph, also served to blast the so-called popularity of the late Viceroy as flourished by Willingdon Clubs, Willingdon Hospitals, Willingdon Colleges, Willingdon Hostels, and what not! It was Lord Willingdon's turn to make a splendidly "grateful return" of Jinnah's services to the Empire! Jinnah scented it all and with the announcement of the appointment of Lord Willingdon as the Viceroy simultaneously proclaimed his intention of keeping out of India and working for his cause in England. Willingdon left him severely alone for the third Round Table Conference and the Joint Parliamentary Committee—and thus allowed Hamlet to be staged without the Prince of Denmark! Old scores were thus nicely paid off! Willingdon proved the wisdom of that statement attributed to Machiavelli that "anybody who supposes that new services induce great folk to forget old injuries, make a vast mistake."



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

When the tin-gods found Jinnah unsuited to further their designs they slighted and affronted his vanity by excluding him from the third R.T.C. He who pompously declared to his countrymen that he was leaving the country for good, and warmly embrace the Englishman in his own castle, that his counsel would be sought after and not gratuitously rendered, that others would go to him and he wouldn't go to them, was utterly neglected and left in the cold. "If I go, who stays? And if I stay, who goes?" interrogated the greatest Florentine citizen of his time, when approached to lead an embassy to the ruler of the Vatican about foreign intervention in the affairs of the state which supported the opposing faction in the home-Republic. What Dante uttered in his sublime poetic mood before his exile from the "noblest of Italian cities," the author of the "Fourteen Muslim Points" has times without number publicly expressed. "If you want Mr. Jinnah's support," he stated at an All-Party Conference, "do what he says. It is no use having Jinnah on your side without according support to his demands." The turn of events are not allowed to stay just because he is not there to lead his mighty hand! Withal, the sun courses his daily round in the heavens!

Jinnah has denounced Gandhi as a Hindu leader forgetting that the Indian National Congress is composed of Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Parsis and even Europeans—for it was founded by Englishmen and once commanded the unstinted allegiance of Jinnah himself. He wanted Gandhi to come to terms with him only after his implicit acceptance of Hindu leadership. In short, Jinnah demanded that Gandhi deliver him Pakistan and thus raise his own value in delivering the goods of Swaraj to the Indian nation. Yet it was the same Jinnahsaheb who strongly disclaimed having ever called the Congress "A Hindu Institution" in a letter to *The Times of India*, when that

paper misreported a speech of his in 1925. The letter reads as follows :—

“To the Editor of *The Times of India*.

Sir,—I wish again to correct the statement which is attributed to me and to which you have given currency more than once and now again repeated by your correspondent “Banker” in the second column of your issue of the 1st, October that I denounced the Congress as “a Hindu Institution.” I publicly corrected this misleading report of my speech in your columns soon after it appeared; but it did not find a place in the columns of your paper and so may I now request you to publish this and oblige.”

This letter was written after Mr. Jinnah left the Congress and became its critic, when the Congress went over to non-co-operation, civil disobedience and boycott of the Councils.

Having been secretly and openly encouraged by the agents of British Imperialism, Jinnah’s vanity increased. He went bounding on the political horizon, with his stocks soaring sky-high. Thank the Congress for that, for before the Congress ran the Provincial Ministries, Mahomed Ali Jinnah was the leader of only a sectional group of malcontents. When he insisted on Pakistan, the Frenchman’s immortal phrase summed up the situation :—“He is a cabinet-maker who cuts down a whole forest to make a wardrobe.”

If the judicial-mindedness of the late Sir Sikander, the Punjab Premier and the expediency of the Bengal Premier, Fuzlul Huq, were brought to bear upon the communal question and Jinnah allowed freedom of action to his great lieutenants all the trouble would have vanished in less than an hour. “We dare not interfere; nobody’s wise suggestions cut across his dictates,” exasperatingly remarked a foremost Muslim leader. The Bengal Muslim Premier and Jinnah fell out violently. One should have watched the fray; how he smote Jinnah, hip and thigh! Fuzlul Huq

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

laid at Jinnah's door every evil of vainglorious communal leadership, his irritating interference in provincial communal affairs so as to cut asunder the cord of Muslim solidarity and threatened that he would start a rival Muslim League.

"The League atmosphere has been made utterly un-Islamic and entirely undemocratic by Mr. Jinnah," thundered the Bengal Premier. "It is the will of one man that prevails and this one man is more haughty and arrogant than the proudest of the Pharaohs. The whole power of the League is vested in one man who is known as the Quaid-I-Azam. Free expression of opinion in the League is utterly stifled. The present All-India Muslim League does not include within its fold various essential sections of the Muslims of India and chief amongst these are the Jamait-Ulema-e-Hind, who are admittedly the most learned of Muslim divines and who are considered as authorities on Muslim theology and culture, the Momins, the Ahrars of the Punjab, the Khudai Khitmadgars the Khaksars and most of the Muslims of Sind and other provinces!"

Let us have the word of one of the early authors of Pakistan. Dr. Syed Abdul Latif of Hyderabad spent more time and thought on the idea long before Jinnah propagated it. On the eve of the historic sessions of the All-India Congress Committee in August 1942, when Mahatma Gandhi was invested with the leadership of the "Open Rebellion," Dr. Syed Abdul Latif stated :—

"Instead of pursuing the move for an honourable settlement initiated by himself, Mr. Jinnah not only side-tracks it at a critical moment but rakes up old memories and pours abuse and ridicule over the head of Mr. Gandhi, the one man with whom he will have ultimately to reach a settlement. And he does this in a language and style so alien to Muslim cultural traditions. Mr. Jinnah has many personal virtues; but his manners as a leader, his treatment of political opponents, his obstructionist tactics and his aggressive methods in the presentation of the Muslim stand-point have all gone to weaken what is intrinsically a strong cause of the Muslims. He must know that the intellectuals among the Muslims, particularly the

younger generation are growing increasingly restless over his politics. If Mr. Jinnah would lay his hand on his heart and reflect, he would feel that during these three years of war, he has been simply sitting on the fence, surrounded by a docile and colourless Working Committee of his own creation, awaiting opportunities of but temporary gains, or quarrelling with the Congress on the one hand and some of own colleagues on the other over issues of petty prestige or nursing unsophisticated Muslim masses on slogans of a brand of Pakistan, the full and numerous implications of which, I have reason to believe, he and his Working Committee, have neither studied nor attempted to grasp.

"The real Muslim problem does not concern so much the Muslims of those parts where they form majority and can on that account look after themselves under any constitution, as it concerns the Muslim minorities in Delhi, Lucknow, Patna, downwards to Cape Comorin, who will be rendered eternal orphans under Mr. Jinnah's plan.....

"I venture to submit to Mr. Jinnah for his very earnest consideration that his present politics will decidedly lead to civil war which every sensible Muslim should endeavour to avoid."

Mr. Jinnah feebly answered that a busybody had strayed into the Congress fold; he gave no effective reply on the merits of the case put forth by one of the authors of the Pakistan scheme itself. To him, his opponents are busybodies or nobodies, as he deems himself to be everybody! Maulana Azad was a nobody to the League Feuhrer at all times! How many times had not the Congress stretched out its hand for conciliation; every attempt got rebuffed by Jinnah. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad declared on the eve of his arrest that Jinnah banged the door against a settlement every time it was put to him by Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Bose, Pandit Nehru and himself, the President of the Congress.

Jinnah's real trouble was that Sind, a Muslim province was far long ruled by a non-League Ministry headed by that astute nationalist Muslim, Khan Bahadur Allah Bux.,

who refused to obey his *firman* and renounced his title. Bengal, another large Muslim province, is headed by the "Muslim League Rebel," Premier Fuzlul Huq; the North-West-Frontier, where the Pathan Muslims predominate is veritably bossed by the Congress Muslims, headed by its ex-Premier, Dr. Khan Sahib, the brother of the "Frontier Gandhi." The Punjab Ministry was led by a Liberal Muslim, the late Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, who was not a League fanatic. And the last Muslim Province of Assam was at one time run by a Coalition Ministry predominately Congress.

What then did Jinnah want? He demanded that the Congress obey his *fatwas* in non-Muslim provinces of Hindustan and cut out all the Muslim provinces and make him their head. He flourished on his reactionary technique which aimed at the destruction of national solidarity and the utter dismemberment of the country. In 1915 at Lucknow he wrenched separate electorates from the Congress by a promise to fight for Swaraj and quickly parted company with the Congress within two years. Thereafter he flaunted his fourteen points and almost succeeded in securing thirteen out of them from British Imperialism for thwarting the national aspirations of India. But the Communal Award proved a dead sea fruit and Muslims who expected to capture places of position and power were soon disillusioned. Stagnation set in despite the majorities; and the minorities converted into majorities. Jinnah, the League Feuhrer, was now born of this stagnation and frustration. In 1938, Jinnah offered his hand to the Congress in its fight against the British if the Congress gave him fifty-fifty basis in the constitution. In 1939 he made this same offer to the British and was willing to turn the tables against the Congress. He further promised to hurl the enemy out of India, with invincible strength if Muslim States were conceded in a post-war India and thus Pan-Islamism established.

Such in short was the grand role of the Quaid-I-Azam in Indian politics! When Rajagopalachari offered him the lead of a National Cabinet, he rapped out like Trotsky :— “What contemptible ambition to abandon a historic position for a portfolio?”

Jinnah slid into Pakistan mentality with all the frenzy of a fanatic. Dressed in immaculate European clothes, which once earned him the title of being the best-dressed man in Indian politics, he now donned the *ijjar* and *sherwani* and fraternised with the Muslim crowds. He threw off his hat and put on a fez; when he did not wear the fez, he went bare-headed. Not known to have a passion for the *namaz*, the Id Day saw him faithfully bending with the low and the poor and the rich on the Azad Maidan, Bombay. Himself a Khoja, a community definitely born of Hindu stock, he became more fanatical than the original Muslim from Arabia or the Middle East.

The most progressive of the Muslim national states, successfully divorced religion from politics. The Turkish Press Delegation now (February 1943) touring India stated to a meeting of the Punjab Muslim Press :—

“Obeying the Koran and administering a country, Turkey has found, are two different things and we have successfully divorced religion from politics.”

They dealt a crushing blow to the dreams of a Pan-Islamic Federation of the religion-obsessed Indian visionaries by disclaiming any interest in such a scheme. The Turks are Turks first and Muslims afterwards! They believe in a progressive interpretation of the Holy Book. Religion, said the Turks, was an honourable institution in their country. As a personal and individual affair it was not allowed to influence administration. The press reported that an Indian Muslim M.L.A. was shocked at their statements and warned the Turks: “You are making the mistake of your lives by ignoring the teachings of the Koran. You

are treading a dangerous path." The Turks were unimpressed by this warning! When will our Muslim brethren learn from their co-religionists from the land of the Attaturk?

This quondam nationalist, this Muslim Gokhale now turned into the most bigoted, reactionary and uncompromising Muslim leader of the past half a century of Indian politics, who elevated the monstrosity of Pakistan into a slogan and doctrine, is innocent of any courtesy. He wants to fight everybody except his own self. He suffers terribly from a swollen head. With no record of modesty, humility is definitely not one of his merits. A former Home Member of the Government of India, the late Sir William Vincent once bitterly remarked :—" You always attack us, I.C.S. Officers as being arrogant. My dear fellow, I wish you to point to a single I.C.S. Officer who can approach Mr. Jinnah in arrogance, offensiveness and insulting treatment of others." No one can forget how he insulted the noble and patriotic president of the Indian National Congress, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, rated as the most eminent scholar of Islam. Who can forget the episode when the whole press at New Delhi boycotted the conference fixed up with Jinnah because he fell foul of a pressman. These things simply do not happen with other Indian leaders. Jinnah is known to have treated Government servants and men from the mighty Government Houses and even Vice-regal Lodge with more contempt and offence than Congressmen, out of social bounds, ever dreamt of. His proud ego claims no preference but only homage to his own deity. " I neither raised Gandhi into a demi-god nor do I now hurl him off the pedestal," he told the present writer in the quietness of his Chambers long before he donned the mantle of Quaid-I-Azam. Withal it must be said to his lasting credit that gold and silver cannot buy him and he is the most incorruptible man in Indian politics.

One place will long cherish Jinnah's memory; there it will remain imperishable. Courage and sheer impudence have won him fame in the law courts. His hypnotic influence bruited his fame abroad and the rumour of his name spreads in accordance with the thrills, his terrific encounters with the judges and bomb-shells he throws in the Courts. As an advocate, he possesses gifts which cast a spell on the courts—the judges, the juries, the solicitors and clients, all alike! As a counsel he has ever held his head erect, unruffled by the worst circumstances. He has been our boldest advocate; no judge dare bully him. He will not brook any insult. Jinnah's ready tongue and brilliant advocacy have warded off all "judicial storms" and won him all-round admiration. His assertiveness has frightened away judges so as not to damage his practice at the bar in the slightest manner as was the case with the late Sir Edward Marshall Hall who suffered for his flashes of fury. Clients and Solicitors prize Jinnah's services for his matchless grit and courage to stand up for the causes he represents. Certain judges, notorious for their calculated insults to the junior practitioners, hold their tongue when face to face with Jinnah. "Mr. Jinnah," angrily shouted a British Civilian occupant of a Criminal Appellate Bench, transported to the High Court from the Moffussil where he had been accustomed to lord it all over the awed practitioners and frightened litigants, "you aren't addressing a third class magistrate." Rapier-like flashed the thrust, the judge none the happier for his thoughtless indiscretion; "There isn't a third class counsel before your lordship!" The press blazoned forth the retort as the fruit of Jinnah's flourishing *forte* as an advocate.

The intrepid and fearless advocate is innocent of a deep knowledge of law. Fireworks attract him; seizing small points and making most of them constitute his stock-in-trade. Neither the Appellate Court nor Civil causes spread over days together warm him up. He is an



advocate rather than a lawyer, though there is the combination in him that goes to make up both. He enjoys the double privilege of being the centre of public attention and also to have had his name quite familiarised in the official law reports. The layman ignorant of the essential though refined distinction between a lawyer and advocate mistakes both as one and the same thing. However, Jinnah's knowledge of law has not been as poor as that of one of Britain's foremost criminal advocates, who dominated juries and wrested favourable verdicts for the causes he brilliantly espoused. Jinnah has not been thrust into as tight a corner as the late Sir Edward Marshall Hall, who by his driving forensic eloquence "rose in his strength" and rushed to the rescue of the guilty and innocent "as they struggled in the net." Marshall Hall's whispers to his "devils" were veritable shouts dinned into the ears of everyone in the courts. "You must take this point," was his typical manoeuvre to marshal his junior's aid in disentangling himself from any legal knot; "there's some law in it." His biographer tells us that was the reason why "he dreaded the Court of Appeal and appeared only once in the House of Lords." Jinnah does not suffer from so severe a handicap. He does not possess the acute legal mind of his patriotic contemporary, Bhulabhai Jivanji Desai, who knows how to clinch the core of any case. Jinnah's knowledge of law has enabled him to practise in his country's highest courts and later he went to argue before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council before returning to hoist the standard of Pakistan and make confusion worse confounded.

Jinnah is devoid of any gushing philanthropic feelings. He rarely goes out of his way to reap benefits of any favoured position. He asks for no favours and confers none. He rose unaided and aids none. He had his "dog-days" and did no toadying or pandering to keep the pot boiling. He got no backing and grants not a whit of it to anyone. He is the one senior counsel who has turned the

fewest "devils" out of his chambers. He has had no young man whom he has lifted except M. C. Chagla, now a Bombay High Court Judge—perhaps his solitary 'devil.' Chagla shines on his own brilliant attainments. Solicitors and clients go to Jinnah; he does not go to them. He will not grab money; but will stand for his just dues and no more. When some Aligarh students once came down all the way to Bombay to consult him he sent them away with the curt expression:—"See me through my solicitors." Jinnah's standard is rigid and inelastic, shutting out precedents and exceptions. It has been stated that "the relationship between the two branches of the profession is almost a delicate one. The barrister who toadies to solicitors is rightly despised by both the branches of the profession, and even friendship and relationship with an attorney will excite a sneer from brothers at the Bar." Jinnah has preserved his position at the Bar intact and unsullied. Toadying or the remotest connection that excites suspicion is foreign to his nature. In short, he is the embodiment of the highest standards of the bar. The compliment paid him that he is "the Lord Simon of the Indian Bar" does not awkwardly sit on him.

Mahomed Ali Jinnah is the old type of materially successful lawyer-politician, ungoverned by emotion, generous impulses or driving patriotic fervour. No moral revolution nor flaming self-sacrifice will be recorded in his career. He lacks that spark of the soul which will lift him to moral and patriotic heights attained by his contemporaries. His marriage to Miss Rutty Petit, the only daughter of the Parsi Baronet, the late Sir Dinshaw Petit, was a typical romance, responsible for much of his nationalism. Young Mrs. Jinnah got her share of blows and brickbats when the Town Hall meeting to consider the proposal of an address to Lord Willingdon was broken up. It is interesting to note that Jinnah finally cut himself off from the genuinely nationalist fold sometime after her death.

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

Had she lived her enthusiasm and impulse would have installed her in the front of law-breakers along with the Perins and Safias, Kamalas and Hansas, Leelas and Radhas, Arunas and Purnimas. Pakistan was flaunted long after his charming wife was laid into an early grave.

Depressing is the story of this lost leader of Indian nationalism! The *Manchester Guardian* rightly summed up his position :—

“Mr. Jinnah’s position at the R.T.C. was unique. The Hindus thought he was a Muslim communalist, the Muslims took him to be a pro-Hindu, the Princes deemed him to be too democratic. The Britishers considered him a rabid extremist—with the result that he was everywhere but nowhere. None wanted him.”

Now he is the boss of the Muslim League where none dare challenge him. Neither “a handful of silver” or “a riband to stick in his coat,” can induce Jinnah to espouse or desert causes. He will ever remain unbought though not unspoilt—therein lies the abiding strength of his weaknesses. His “ego” made him leave the Congress standard he so gloriously pitched in his youth. The last sound will never echo the first. Mahomed Ali Jinnah is the damaged Archangel of Indian politics. “The pity of it, Iago, O the pity of it!”



**KHAN ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN**



## KHAN ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN

**G**ANDHI earned his title of "Mahatma" after fifty years of unparalleled public service; but an admiring, captivated public within fifty days conferred the universally respected name of 'Gandhi' on our Frontier patriot. Not content with this, it invested him with all the attributes for which the Mahatma is famous, though the British bureaucracy strenuously denied every trait of goodness associated with his name. The *chela* almost outshone the *guru* and the supremacy of the *asal* Gandhi was challenged by another whom India affectionately called the "Frontier Gandhi." The one guards our gates from foreign attacks and the other is out to batter down the walls of violence.

"The Romans used to call men who had no family distinction, but were coming into public notice through their own achievements, *new men*." Such was the "new man" of Indian politics in 1930 as far as office and distinction were concerned. One fine morning of April, 1930 brought Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan into national and international notice, preceded by the sensational news that the Garhwali Regiment categorically refused to shoot down his unarmed and helpless men and women followers. The Peshawar shooting of 1930 shocked the civilized world and mystery surrounded the wild dash that Sir Norman Bolton made from Peshawar to Bombay to catch the earliest boat home and the summary acceptance of his resignation from the Governorship of the North-Western-Frontier Province.

The central figure of the drama burst upon the public gaze with irresistible attraction. The horrors of the Jallianwalla Massacre of 1919 established the Mahatma's reputation, though South Africa had already created its dazzling background. Peshawar of 1930 repeated the Punjab tragedy on a smaller scale and all the world thereupon was filled with

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

the noise of the name of the Frontier patriot. The two campaigns of Mahatma Gandhi initiated at Dandi in 1930 and 1932 produced leaders and lieutenants of every stamp. The length and breadth of the country raged with the intensity of a tornado and every one became his or her own leader when the prominent guides were struck down and spirited away behind prison-bars. There was so much light hidden under the bushel; and every crisis was a golden opportunity for men of calibre and patriotism to show their fine mettle. The greatest of them all was from the extreme corner of India, who blazoned forth by a phenomenal restraint of the inherent spirit of violence amongst his clansmen. He stormed public imagination by a course of silent, unostentatious work amongst his people, whom he zealously sought to emulate.

No Congress sessions prior to those of Karachi in 1931 had recognised Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. He first attended the Congress sessions at Cawnpore in 1925 as a mere spectator of the unseemly wrangle fostered by the Responsivists in the Swarajist camp. Six years later, when he was slumbering in one of the delegates' tent at Karachi, a messenger of the Mahatma roused him and dragged him to the *rostrum*. His speech confirmed his reputation. His oration rang through the frenzied audience with a plain and sincere note. Cheers greeted every sentence; fireworks were absent, and heroics there were none! Embellishments and high-sounding platitudes formed no part of his speech. It was the plain statement of a man imbued with plainness and rugged artlessness.

Tall and handsome, with his grey flannel shirt and trousers woven out of the purest khaddar and wearing his Roman sandals, the characteristic footwear of his race, the "Frontier Gandhi," presents a unique figure clothed in exceedingly dignified and attractive form. The reference of Euripides to Heracles fits in on all fours with the personality of the Khan Saheb:—"Plain, unadorned, in a great

crisis, brave and true." Had he been of the party of Greek heroes besieging Troy, he would have been paired with Achilles, the object of King Priam's admiration:—"How large he was and of what mien." The "Frontier Gandhi's" simplicity and plain living has combined in him strength and speed—the normal traits of his race. He is the specimen of Carlyle's strong man who is silent. He is indeed a perfect picture of humility and carries the honours of leadership with lightness and transparent simplicity. "I am a mere *Seepahi*; pray don't make a leader of me"—therein is the substance of his greatness. "I am neither a speaker nor leader but an ordinary soldier, disliking all processions and receptions," declared the Pathan leader when Bombay gave him a boisterous welcome on his return from the Karachi Congress. He afforded us a glimpse of the stuff he is made of when he went on to say that we seemed to have lost all sense of proportion when meagre work was magnified, and further added that he blushed and wondered when people poured praise and applause on him. No wonder he declined the Congress Presidential Crown several times; he just wanted to be a four anna member of the Congress or a *Seepahi* as he humbly puts it. When he first landed in Bombay with his picked band of a score of followers, all in red, decorated cars and omnibuses awaited to convey his entourage, but unlike most of our leaders, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan stoutly refused to sit in the car and walked out the whole distance of the procession. He marched to the Congress House from the docks in the blazing tropical sun of May for nearly three hours. "A soldier needs no car to move about and he must be able to walk with his men" was his rebuke to those who pressed him to get into a conveyance. Like the Mahatma he travels third-class though the ancestral fortune he has inherited, would enable him to reserve a double first-class passage.

Born fifty years ago, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan hails from one of the leading Frontier tribes from a village near



Peshawar. He was educated in the Church Mission High School and can speak English fluently. Being attracted towards the Army and blessed with aristocratic connections, his application for a career in that close-preserve was immediately accepted. But being the witness of the ill-treatment of a relative by an arrogant British Officer, he abandoned the idea of an Army career. His proud, sensitive mind could not brook the "inferiority complex" that tarnished the Army circles. Did not Lenin develop into the deadliest enemy of Czarism when his brother went to the gallows? Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan who once wanted to carve out an army career for himself is now dreaded by the military chiefs, not for his violence (as there is none!) but for his sweeping non-violence! The insolent conduct of British Officers towards their Indian colleagues in the Indian Army diverted the career of the most romantic patriot of the North from an official into a public career.

Having early freed himself from the shackles of an official career, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan turned his attention to public service. He realised the value of education for his people and built up a net-work of national schools. The hand of the authorities instantly came down upon the founder and associates of the national schools, putting every one of them under arrest. Government interfered and suppressed the schools during the Great War. The War over, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan led the agitation against the infamous Rowlatt Act. He earned his conviction along with his father and suffered imprisonment for some months. By this time, the young Frontier leader had sufficiently imbibed Gandhi's spirit of Passive Resistance and again courted the wrath of the authorities. During the Non-Cooperation movement, he was arrested under the Frontier Regulations and sentenced to three years' hard labour. Three years after the Cawnpore Congress, the Mahatma and his *chela* met for the first time at Lucknow. Thereafter the Khan Sahab organised his men into a "Jirga"

with branches everywhere to foster the cult of nationalism, on the lines of the Congress and his schools were the harbingers of nationalism, communal amity, social reform and rural uplift through spinning and weaving. The authorities put every kind of obstacle in his way but he fought them all with his dogged Pathan determination.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's biggest achievement is his organisation of the *Khudai Khidmatgars*. Inspired by the extraordinary smart work turned out by the volunteers at the Lahore Congress, the Frontier leader returned to his Province with the resolve of establishing a parallel institution of volunteers, open to every community. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan hit upon the simple term of *Khudai Khidmatgar*, meaning the "servant of God," which gripped the imagination of the martial tribes, of the old and the young. The volunteers were strictly enjoined to wear khaddar and the red colour of their uniform was preferred for its powers of resistance against dirt. Thus the 'red' aspect associated with their organisation meant nothing. They were not like Garibaldi's "Red Coats" furiously scaling mountains—flying from hill to hill. The "Frontier Gandhi's" "Red shirts" were no believers in guerilla warfare. They were pledged to non-violence and held aloft the Mahatma's banner. Picketing of foreign liquor and cloth was their main activity. Their organisation was self-supporting, non-communal, recognized no sex-bar and stood for active social uplift and economic independence. Pathans walked miles to offer their services as pickets, so much enthralled were they with the idea of freedom sowed in their minds by the founder, father, guide and philosopher of their movement. Tens of thousands were speedily enrolled and it was a fighting unit on strictly military lines without the least display of violence. When Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru reiterated his assertion at the Karachi Congress that he would blindly sign any demand made by the Frontier people in view of their magnificent sacrifices for the na-

tional cause, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan enthusiastically responded that "his people were ready to offer their heads by the thousand and place them in the hands of the Congress Dictator, to follow him unto death." Consequently followed the affiliation of the "Red Shirts" to the premier national organisation.

The "Frontier Gandhi's" greatest title to fame is that he has transformed born fighters, ready to do battle at a moment's notice, into veritable lambs, saturated with the spirit of non-violence. He has wrought a miracle amidst a people nurtured in open warfare and violence. To have reversed the order, in a region where supremacy was hitherto decided by the ferocious, rapacious rule that he who kept his sword the sharpest won the day, is an achievement almost incapable of human belief. To have meticulously spread non-violence when every spot in his land seemed to have an odour of blood is indeed a modern miracle. The Pathans who have throughout their history lived by the sword and died by the sword, now disdain to hold even a stick in their hands, when once they are won over to the creed of their leader. Scarcely a decade ago every second Pathan in the Khan Saheb's territory carried a rifle or a lathi rounded off with an iron ring but to-day only old men lean on their staffs. For thousands of years, the law of retaliation was the very breath of the Pathan's nostrils. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan has revolutionised this mental outlook.

"During the last struggle our houses were burnt, our volunteers were caned, our youths who courted imprisonment were awarded solitary confinement, our villages were in a state of siege for weeks together and yet Government could not lay their hands on a single instance when our volunteers resorted to violence or retaliatory measures"

—this challenge hurled by the Khan Saheb after the end of the Gandhi-Irwin Truce remains unanswered. It was no small matter for a Pathan to have preserved his temper when he was insulted and belaboured and illtreated for

merely standing opposite a liquor or a cloth shop. Not one *Khudai Khidmatgar* raised his finger in retaliation! To have been thus ill-treated in the presence of their womenfolk was a galling thing—yet they murmured not. The “Frontier Gandhi” gives the whole credit to the *real* Gandhi, “who,” he declared “has been more implicitly and loyally obeyed in the Frontier than in any other Province.” This was the spirit that animated hundreds of Pathans, men, women and children when they bared their backs in Peshawar in April, 1930. The Pathan suffers without any press to broadcast his oppression. There is no newspaper to expose the ruthlessness of the regime that grinds him down nor stop the tyranny of the petty officials. Therein is the merit of his silent suffering!

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan put the whole case for the Pathan in a nut-shell when he said: “He is amenable only to love and reason. He will go with you to hell if you once touch his heart. But you can never even make him ascend heavenwards with force as your instrument!” It is this mettle that has made him a force to be reckoned with as a friend and ally of Gandhi, whom he would blindly follow. “I am at his command,” said the Khan Saheb to the present writer at “Mani Bhuvan” in 1931 when the “Red Shirts” were affiliated to the Congress, “I have no plans of my own. If Gandhiji says, I should go, I simply go! Even the *Khudai Khidmatgars* are at his beck and call and under the supreme control of the Congress Working Committee.” The writer put in a hypothetical query as to what would have been Khan Saheb’s attitude if violence came to be adopted on a large scale as a method of winning our freedom. Swift came forth the answer in grave and dignified accents:

“Non-violence is not a policy with me; it is now a matter of faith. It would be a sad day indeed in our history when we throw non-violence overboard. Violence has not the ghost of a chance against machine-guns and then blood would be spilled that would cry out to heaven for

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

vengeance. Triumph awaits us if we stick to non-violence for all time."

It was the magic of non-violence that drew him into the Congress fold, with his unswerving loyalty to its decrees. He threw more light on his pro-Congress stand in a speech he delivered just before his arrest in 1931 :—

"People complain against me for having joined the Congress by selling my people. The Congress is a national institution and not a Hindu body. It is composed of Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians and Jews and even British people. The Congress as a body is working against British domination. British Imperialism is the enemy of the Congress and of the Pathans. I have, therefore, made common cause with the Congress to get rid of British Imperialism ..... When my people were in trouble I went with a begging bowl and knocked at every door, including that of the Muslim League and they all turned me down. But the Congress received me with open arms. How can Pathans even forget those who have helped them in their distress?"

There is no line of distinction between the attitude of the fire-eating section of the British press and the conduct of the bureaucracy on the Frontier. The London *Daily Express* branded the Khan Saheb "an experienced blusterer and unequalled opportunist, a born publicist..... and with his movement affiliated to the Congress, he is verily the Emperor of the "Red Shirts." According to the *Daily Mail*, the Frontier

"is an outpost of the Soviet Republic . . . the spear-head of the attack on India . . . with Russian gold pouring in across the Khyber Pass . . . the Moslems being armed with Russian weapons. . . . their leader is the terrible Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a gaolbird and relentless enemy of the British."

Robert Bernays, a Liberal M. P. and an ex-President of the Oxford Union nailed the lie to the counter when he wrote in his *Naked Fakir* :

"Abdul Ghaffar Khan is kindly, gentle and rather lovable man. As well think that old George Lansbury is a

## KHAN ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN

dangerous revolutionary as imagine that Abdul Ghaffar Khan is the relentless enemy of the Raj."

Then came the orders of the puny authorities ruling Peshawar with the really big stock—declaring the city out of bounds for Europeans! Thus the Pathan "bogey" flourished. British Imperialism sedulously fostered the frightening notion in the minds of the public that the Pathan is a bully and a hooligan; but Gandhi's campaigns revealed his true character. We have been for years together the helpless victims of persistent and invidious British propaganda—the calumny of Pathan life which paints him in such lurid, revolting aspects as a barbarous, inhuman and savage creature, constituting a menace to Indian life and property. The wretched veil is now completely torn off! We stand face to face, brothers-in-arms and brothers-in-woe!

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan cited that typical instance of gross misrepresentation. He stated that when he was a prisoner during the Non-Co-operation period in 1921 in the Dera Gazi Jail, his Hindu fellow-prisoner told him how his desire to visit the Frontier was thwarted by a feeling that the Pathans were cannibals! The Khan Saheb with an exemplary sense of justice, does not want us to believe that all Pathans are angels; but neither are they all hooligans. He deplores that for nearly a century, interested parties determined to divide our forces have spread this pernicious propaganda. He thanks the Lord for having for the first time united "the brain and muscle of India." Crores of rupees were squandered in the "Forward Policy" of the Government of India—in building roads and strengthening fortresses and occupying the "Khajuri Plains" but if only a millionth part of these colossal sums of money was spent actuated by a spirit of good-will in befriending the Pathans and spreading education amongst them, they would have turned out to be the most invincible guardians of the Frontier; and then no one would have dared to covet.

the plains of Hindustan as long as the last of the Pathans was alive! The Government has consistently spurned the chances of converting the Frontiersmen into permanent faithful gate-keepers of India.

The "Frontier Gandhi" has ruthlessly exposed the other side of the propaganda. He has refused to be drawn in the game that Swaraj means Hindu majority and Pathan inferiority! He has seen through the nefarious game. He vigorously replied: "Even if it comes to be a Hindu Raj, our lot will not be worse than what it is already under British Raj." When Pakistanites taunt him telling him that Gandhi is nobody but the spokesman of a Hindu "rump," he effectively cites the Koran that "God has granted to every people a prophet in its own tongue."

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's views on communal unity are in most refreshing contrast to those promulgated by the rank communalists on his side. He silenced the cry of those who shouted in season and out of season: "Islam in danger!" with the crushing rejoinder:—

"Slaves have no religion! Islam holds slavery in abhorrence. When Congress is fighting for liberty, it is shame for you to stand aside with folded arms. Don't they feel ashamed that they should ask for a share of the fruits of the Congress fight, having deliberately shirked the encounter. Why should the Congress be a Hindu body? Why should it be not yours? It will be equally yours, if you will have your fighting share in it. The Congress is fighting for Independence, not for Hindus alone, but for all. Why should some Muslims say that the Gandhi movement is a Hindu movement? It started 1400 years ago. There can be no question of a majority or minority now. Don't you see that a few, handful Englishmen keep in bondage 33 crores of people. How does your majority theory work there? It is the quality that counts and not the quantity. Muslims would be prodigious fools and dig their own graves if they thought that they should leave India when the Britishers were turned out."

## KHAN ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN

The Khan Saheb shatters the case for Muslim isolation and the consequent studied indifference of the selfish minority towards the nationalist cause. His cold reasoning and statement of facts are unassailable. When the writer asked for his views on the Hindu-Muslim question he was surprised with his outspokenness :—

“The Hindu-Muslim problem would last as long as the British hold sway over us. The third party will always work to thwart our attempts for a lasting solution. Small wonder therefore, that Jinnahs and Iqbals are made tools in this big game. Whoever will end foreign domination, will also end this problem.”

The writer put him a straight question whether the work of national liberation should await the pleasure of communalists, until they saw reason and came to terms. “No,” was the emphatic answer; “if trouble still brews, the fight cannot be postponed on account of that. *It must go on, whatever the circumstances.*”

The Gandhi section in the Congress blamed the present writer for taking the Khan Saheb to a Christian meeting in 1934 after the Bombay Sessions of the Congress. The small Congress town at Worli was named after him. He was hauled up for his “seditious” speech to the Bombay Christians and awarded two years imprisonment when he had just finished one term of imprisonment. Congress was about to order him to be silent and was thus agitated about his imprisonment. It was felt to be unjust that he should be gaoled for speaking a couple of plain and simple home-truths to a minority community like the Christians and a much lesser term of imprisonment would have served the occasion—if he was deemed guilty at all by an obliging Magistrate of the British bureaucracy. Bhulabhai Desai in his speech in the Central Legislative Assembly demanding the release of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan hit the nail on the head regarding the prosecution launched against the Frontier patriot :—

“I was perhaps the last man who was closely associated with Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan before his last convic-



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

tion and incarceration for a speech which was unearthed, some three or four months after it was made. It became almost a problem as to why that speech was unearthed and what was in it. . . . Yet one fine morning in Wardha he was arrested for a speech that he delivered before a Christian gathering only for the purpose of giving an honest account of what had occurred to his own personal knowledge, with reference to the movement he had led. . . . The first question after his arrest that he asked me as Counsel was, "If truth can be a defence to the charge I am quite prepared to stand the trial and prove every single statement that is made in that speech." And indeed it amazed an honest Pathan to be told that he could not, that he might bring the Government into contempt and ridicule if he told the barest truth. For indeed the very basis of the section appears to be that the Government must be deemed to be ideal; he is guilty under Section 124-A of the *Indian Penal Code*."

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan has snubbed those who would strain at a gnat and yet swallow a huge animal.

"What sort of religion is it that cannot suffer some noise outside a mosque or suffer a twig being broken off a tree? When there was Martial Law in Peshawar and time and again bugles blared forth before mosques without compunction, where were these sanctified defenders of religion? They had not even the courage to open their mouths in protest. Muslims then were not even allowed to go to the mosque for their prayers and it was an armed soldier that sounded forth the bugle at the appointed hour. Done by a Britisher it is permissible; but done by a Hindu, it instantaneously becomes a crime! That is how you work your religion! Beware of fanatics who make men insane and bloodthirsty in the name of religion! I have read both the Holy Koran and the Gita; and religion therein means nothing but love."

The "Frontier Gandhi" has stormed the citadel of orthodoxy—the last refuge of unenlightened and unholy obstructionists against progress. He is an unsparing critic of the advocates of the "purdah," who have denied their sisters here and abroad their freedom for centuries. He

stands for the equal rights of women in society without being unmindful of the exhortation of his Prophet : "The world and all the things in it are valuable. But the most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous woman." He declares open war on the fanatics who would shut up their women for all time, though enjoying themselves fullest licence and liberty. He quotes chapter and verse and asks his opponents to read the Prophet's injunctions. He would triumphantly cite the authority of the Koran to spread dismay in the camp of the enemy. He maintains that they dare not pit their interpretation in public against the explicit word of the Founder of their Faith. What the Prophet has said is nothing less and nothing more! Ideals of Islam are opposed to preconceptions and prejudices which from age to age have degenerated into grossest superstitions. The leader who said that "Paradise lies at the feet of mothers," is not honoured by his own adherents in the practice of the tenets he preached.

Turning to the point of forced seclusion of Indian Muslim women, the "Frontier Gandhi" told the writer that it never possessed an iota of religious sanction.

"Those Indian Muslims who would shut up their women-folk, inflict pure and simple punishment on them. According to Islam, purdah is meant to ward off, bad and disruptable women, so that by confining them sometime they may be reformed in their character. The punishment meted out to our women here is thoroughly un-Islamic and the sooner we end it, Islam would be purged of its worst evil. Besides, the purdah in India was entirely responsible for the backwardness of the Community and we could never go ahead unless our women were liberated from their shackled condition."

The Khan Sahab was opposed to licence and untrammelled liberty given to women and expressed a dislike for short sleeves. He admired the rising womanhood of India, regenerated by the influence of the Civil Disobedience campaigns. He felt proud of the Frontier women and contract-

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

ed their condition with those of their co-religionists in India. He felt proud of his brother's (Dr. Khan Saheb's) daughter-in-law, Safia Sadullah Khan, the gallant and patriotic leader of the Bombay Congress Desh Sevikas, frequently courting imprisonment.

"In our part of the country, women freely join us in our struggle. They are a part and parcel of all our processions and demonstrations. In fact, there are a number of them in the Khudai Khidmatgars. They hold aloft the banners at our meetings and invite the blows on their heads as heartily as any of our men. The women move out without any restraint. The poor and the middle class women go out with perfect freedom. It is only the few rich but uncultured and wicked lot that still raise iron walls before them, for they are suspicious of all the world, being themselves unclean of heart! The average woman amongst us is never afraid to go out and gladly brushes her shoulders with the men in all our activities."

The Frontier leader is a staunch advocate of female education and instanced the case of his daughter who was in a Convent at Murree and that of his niece, who was educated in England.

Such is Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the commanding leader of the Frontier phalanx. By a process of slow noiseless and unceasing hostility, he has banded his *Khudai Khidmatgars* into a weapon that hurls defiance at British supremacy in the land of the Pathans. The utter callousness of the authorities has raised him to a pitch of truly national greatness. In him are exhibited the finest and noblest traits of leadership. Unknown and unasked he has come with his legions into the Congress fold and will remain there through good and evil report. His unalloyed allegiance to the national cause exacts our genuine admiration and gratitude. He is the most formidable gate-keeper of our Frontier and will stick to his post, fighting unto the last ditch! The Morning Star of Pathan Reformation, our fate is safe in his keeping.



**BAL GANGADHAR KHER**



## BAL GANGADHAR KHER

**"I** have seen this young man hurling defiance at our jailors. He bears Nariman's stamp. You Christian fisherfolk must cast every one of your votes for him," declared a speaker in excellent Marathi, warmly patting the back of this poor candidate for the Bombay Legislative Assembly on the Congress ticket. He held up Nariman as the model of courage, resource and patriotism to that vast gathering of fisherfolk at Koliwada, Worli, Bombay. Fisherfolk were they all, and you could not distinguish the Hindu from the Christian. Christ must have recruited his disciples from such a splendid, faithful and unsophisticated crowd and turned them on the world as the greatest fishers of men. There was no mistake about them that cold night when Nariman as the leader of the Bombay Congress party presided, and Kher and this present writer addressed the electioneering meeting. The crowd with fish-smelling nets and hooks was cent per cent. Congress. Whatever Ramsay MacDonald did or did not do by making Hindus, Christians and Muslims vote in different compartments through the vicious system of communal electorates, this much was certain that night, that whether they were Christian or Hindu fisherfolk they were going to vote *en bloc* for the Congress. They professed allegiance only to one man and that was Gandhi!

The scene changed about a month after, by which time Nariman was not to be the leader of the party which would have otherwise made him the first Prime Minister of Bombay. It was no fault of B. G. Kher either; for he secured the honour, without moving his little finger for it. If ever honour was thrust upon a man it was in the case of Kher. He may have held up Nariman as the supreme example of courage, sacrifice and ability, as a

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

worthy example for all young men, but he later walked on the scene of Premiership without his ever attempting to supplant anyone. The Sirdar no doubt wrested the crown from Nariman; but no eager waiting hand of Kher was ready there to accept it forthwith.

People were at first doubtful in regard to Kher's choice. He was neither the dark horse nor a favourite at the outset. The public even asked as to who Kher was. Nariman was then universally popular and the idol of the city. Kher was known to be a good Solicitor and an excellent Bombay Suburban Congress worker. His reputation had not travelled beyond those frontiers. However, his innate virtues shone and the public were not slow to recognize them. His virtues became Nariman's disqualifications. When Horniman conducted his raging and tearing campaign in favour of Nariman, without his being pro-Nariman, it was the sandalwood tree perfuming the hatchet that ultimately cut it down. Kher's natural courtesy invested him with valour; and there cannot be any courtesy which does not rest on a deep moral foundation. He possessed the most genial manners allied with a brave and clean mind. He carried his courtesy as a letter of credit everywhere. He seemed to have a passion for sweetness and light. He strove to spread that sweetness all around, even amongst the cobblers and shoe-makers and the downcasts right near his residence at Khar. He sought to give them a home, constituted them into a family, a hamlet, a little town of proud, clean and decent citizens. A graceful municipality named the quarter *Kherwadi*. Before Kher reached the Premiership, he had observed rigid discipline and answered the national call whenever it went forth. With the late Jamnalal Bajaj and Mr. D. N. Wandrekar, his faithful Secretary, he was the first to court imprisonment in 1930. They were awarded maximum imprisonment. Again in 1932 he repeated his visit and we, his Nasik Prison fellow-companions remember

how he spurned Government's offer to give parole to see his dying father. When he was imprisoned in 1940 for individual Satyagraha and Gandhiji called upon every one of the released prisoners to go back to jail within a week, Kher offered to go back at once though he had been just released after a year in jail! He had not the stock excuse trotted out by some others who conveniently remained out on some pretext or the other. Such was the training and discipline Kher underwent before and after he stepped into the Premiership.

He possessed neither the brilliance of Rajagopalachari, the Madras ex-Premier, nor the infinite capacity for intrigue which characterised one or two of his colleagues in the ministry. He was a plain, straightforward man, who zealously fulfilled plain and simple duties. He indulged in no heroics, aimed at no impossible targets, but his heart could be touched by the purest idealism. He never spoke harshly and people misunderstood his forbearance for weakness, with the result that his ministerial team had difficulty in sliding over at least one ambitious though exceedingly capable member. But firm people can also be gentle and the bedrock of gentleness is firmness. Kher also loves the beautiful and deeply appreciates music. He is blessed with five sturdy sons and no daughter. Hence a basketful of brides was the rosy prospect he faced as an ideal family man. Kher's wife was the typical devoted Hindu wife to whom her home was her shrine and her children her deities. She was fired with no earthly ambition and was known to have attended not a single function with her husband, much less by herself. Kher made friends and retained their friendship. The writer recalls how many times he used to express the warmest admiration for Mahomed Ali Jinnah when we were fellow-prisoners in 1932. He told us of the party he had thrown in Jinnah's honour on the eve of his departure for England for good (as Jinnah then stated) from India in 1931. Pakistan has



made no difference with Kher; he can still cherish friendships though politics may threaten them. Jayakar still treats him as if he were almost his god-son! Muslims, Christians and Europeans entertain the highest regard for the nobility and integrity of his character and to them all he is a veritable angel in the lion's den of the Congress party! When he addressed an annual general meeting of the Bombay Anglo-Indians, they fell head over heels in love with Kher's personality. They boldly stated that as long as he was the head of our province they were not afraid of their future.

Kher has cultivated utmost tolerance and kindness for every man's religion. Like Rajagopalachari, he was once a Mason. The writer recalls that on the Christmas Day of 1932 Kher organised a special meeting of Nasik Jail prisoners to celebrate Christmas and the only Christian's services as a speaker had to be requisitioned from another jail yard. This writer had to perform the feat of scaling the walls to keep his engagement! Thanks to Col. Madan Gopal Bhandari, now the chief of the Bombay prisons who was then our "keeper" at Nasik, the writer was later penalised and kept in a particular yard where a poor Muslim habitual convict was assaulted. They did not want the news to leak out to the other prisoners, much less to the public outside. The writer who was a witness of the assault and made a written report had to be kept where he was and not sent back to his companions in the other jail yard. Later Col. Bhandari charged this writer for "impertinence to the Superintendent" and "unauthorized writings" and detained him for another three months in jail after putting him down in C class. But the galling part of the punishment was the confiscation and destruction of two valuable manuscripts, *Indian Christians and Nationalism* and *Men and Supermen of Hindustan*, the latter of which the writer has rewritten during the last year. Kher, Mashruvalla, (Gandhiji's faithful

companion and secretary, who possessed a soul of goodness and bore his excruciating illness marvellously well despite jail life), Govindarao Hari Deshpande, the Nasik Assembly Member and Marathi orator, Vaishampayan, the brother of the principal accused in the Lamington Road shooting case (Bombay City's first political conspiracy case) and the present writer were the five companions in that yard. Kher and Deshpande were in charge of the jail kitchen. Who could then have dreamt that the jail cook would one day be called to run the administration of the province ?

Whenever Kher rose to speak in the Assembly, the house was hushed into silence. He was not merely a party speaker ; when he spoke, he spoke with the voice of the nation, with accents of dignified authority. He was one of the best debaters in the house and could speak English, Marathi and Hindustani with exceeding ease and fluency. He was not in any way a remarkable master of the platform before he rose to be the Premier, but he developed into one, on account of his having had to deliver frequent speeches up and down the presidency. Kher commanded an eager house, an expectant audience. They always felt that beneath the speaker's voice beat a genuine and warm-hearted patriot's soul. He was neither guilty of pretensions nor trumpeted false claims. He was what he was, and will remain what he is till the end. He wanted no place in the sun and coveted not the goods of this world. He told the students of his old Wilson College that anyone of them could aim at the Premiership, for he was a mere average student at College, not known to have possessed any striking intellectual or other powers ! If the Premiership had not come his way, he would have retired a well contented man, to a suburban town, far from the madding crowd, and there presided over the fortunes of his family, being blessed with a philosopher's temperament. Whilst in jail, he was deeply interested in philosophy and having

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

acquired the correct perspective to look through men and things, he realised the unimportance of the things of this world. Having been the secretary and companion to a totally blind but astute European Judge of the Bombay High Court, the late Sir Frank Beaman, by contact he cultivated a sort of blind man's intuition.

Kher hailed from Ratnagiri, the birthplace of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Both bore the same name and Maharashtra took kindly to the choice of Kher for he was one of them though not of the Responsivist group. Maharashtra politics were once divided between Responsivists and Terrorists. The Communists have now driven a wedge there. Maharashtrians are a virile, patriotic and hardy race. Their minds hark back to the glories of Shivaji and the political triumphs of Tilak. To them without the Lokmanya there would not have been a Mahatma, as in European literature, without Swift, there would have been no Voltaire.

The Mahasabha Leader, V. D. Savarkar, showed rich promise in his youth; when about to be extradited, he flung himself into the straits of Dover and caused a flutter amongst the luminaries of international law by raising the question as to whether he was to be tried by a British or French Court. Continuous confinement became his lot, and when he came out, the hosts of Indian nationalism greeted him with exceeding warmth. His sturdy and turbulent past offered them a chance of gaining a tried recruit; but his absence from real politics on account of his confinement for years together robbed him of that sense of reality in politics and made him the prize-boy of Hindu communal politics. Savarkar who showed such promise in his youth was tragically converted into the fire-eating communalist to be ranged on the side of Moonjes and Parmanands. He should have been the strongest champion of unadulterated nationalism but alas he is now wallowing in the mire of communal politics. The British policy of repression is

responsible for this tragedy and Maharashtra lost a worthy successor to the Lokmanya.

Some of the Maharashtrians are content with half measures; others like the illustrious and rebellious Senapati Bapat, discontented with non-violence, want to bring in the millenium at one stroke. Those that are devoted to Gandhi-ji's ideal like Shankerrao Deo and Appasaheb Patwardhan, genuine disciples of the Mahatma, have rendered true allegiance to him. Dear old Vasudeo Ganesh Joshi, of Poona Chitrashala Press, now past eighty-five, friend and collaborator of Lokmanya Tilak and who suffered imprisonment with us when he was nearing eighty, is a grand remnant of Maharashtra heroism. This present writer was affectionately dubbed in jail as "Vasukaka's grandson." Gadgil, Javdekar, Jedhe, Deogirikar and Joshi have together preserved the best spirit of the Congress in the heart of Maharashtra. The brilliant pair of Patwardhan brothers from Ahmednagar, Rao Saheb and Achyut (the former being amiable though firm) have borne dual allegiance to the Mahatma and Congress Socialism. The Communists want to scotch Congress Socialism. Kher was neither a Responsivist, a Socialist nor a Terrorist like Bapat for whom he had the greatest respect. Discussing Bapat late one night amid the clanking of the warder's heavy-booted feet, we agreed that Bapat was a man who would either bury the jails or the jails would bury him ! Those were Bapat's fiery aims and he has spent a whole life time for the causes in which he has put in his unsullied faith. The Communist idea could never appeal to Kher for apart from his being one of the Mahatma's unflinching disciples, he believed in the essence of human goodness and felt that every conflict could be solved by goodwill and non-violence. Force was a thing which repelled him. He always believed that a drop of honey could cure more ills than a ton of abuse. He went about with his inseparable smile and this warded off all bitterness right

at the outset. His knowledge of every language of the province, and there are at least five current languages, made him at home in every place. All districts and provinces claimed him as their own. He even acquired knowledge of Bengali.

Kher worked hard to run the ministry like a happy family. Some of them were excellent colleagues. Morarji Desai was ideally fitted to be Kher's invaluable colleague and promises to be his worthy successor. Dr. Gilder, our best Heart Specialist, set before him his own excellent ideal, "see everything, listen to few and talk little." Munshi could not contain himself. He combined capacity with ambition and the votaries of Law and Order ultimately submerged him instead of his vanquishing their forces. Between usurping some of Dr. Gilder's functions and patting the Police for their conduct, he had little time for achieving real reforms, especially in the Jail Department. His brilliance flashed everywhere but things remained exactly where they were before. The Prohibition Programme did not leave even a skeleton behind. The abolition of the dual system at the Bar, which retains the superiority of the barristers as against the indigenous advocates and leaves the Solicitors with many privileges, was left untouched. Kher had more heart in this much-needed reform than Munshi; though Kher was a solicitor himself, he was prepared to sacrifice his interests. He was out to give a square deal to the advocates. If Kher had managed the Bar and Prohibition issues directly, by spreading more sweetness around and especially by winning over the sympathy and goodwill of Sir John Beaumont, the Chief Justice of Bombay, for which he was eminently suited, we should have had Prohibition firmly planted amongst us and the scandal of the dual system at the Bar completely abolished.

Then there were Yasin Nurie, A. B. Latthe and L. M. Patil, the other three Ministers. Nurie, a new recruit in Congress politics set a better example than Latthe who has

at last embraced his old political faith and thus been almost the only one, out of the eighty Indian Congress ministers, who returned from jail with as much rapidity as he was thrust in. How could Latthe easily forget his political past and stick to his new faith, which demanded utmost sacrifice, even if it need be of one's own life! Shy and unassuming L. M. Patil, the "baby minister" managed his portfolio quite well and was an example to younger Non-Brahmins.

Such is the history of the Bombay Congress Ministry. It failed in one sore point and this failure was common to every province where Congress ruled. Karl Marx pointed out the cause of the failure of the March Revolution in Germany in the fact that—

"it reformed only the very highest political circles, leaving untouched all the layers beneath them . . . the old bureaucracy, the old army, the old police, the old judges, born and brought up and grown old in the service of absolutism."

Kher was not to be blamed. The remedy next time will have to be applied universally and nothing less! If ever he is called upon to steer the ship again, he will do it as well as he has done it in the past, with this difference that if the requisite change is decided upon, he can be relied upon to fulfill it with firmness and dignity. When the call of the premiership went forth to him, unasked and unsolicited, he at once became the glorious creature of circumstances and ultimately proved the excellence of the choice.





**MIRABEN**





## MIRABEN

**"D**O you realise the gravity of the crime of thrusting English down the throats of Indians," the British Admiral's Khaddar-clad daughter sharply reproved the present writer at Mani Bhuvan, Gamdevi, sometime in 1934, long before Gandhiji removed his Bombay residence to the palatial Mount Pleasant Road quarters of the industrialist magnate Birla. "See how the villagers hunger for their own language, even when they starve; you had better go and look up the thousand villages of hungry Hindustan as I have done. They will easily master Hindustani," were the words of extreme self-confidence and utter self-possession addressed to this writer and he went away a wise and subdued man! The voice was the voice of the new recruit, the fair, fanatic female who tears down opposition and scales mountains of obstacles. She traversed the destitute villages of Hindustan barefooted, with carding bow and spinning wheel, from north to south and from east to west, eating whatever food offered her as sustenance and thus doing some kind of reparation for the wrongs of her countrywomen who arrogantly flitted across the clubs and flattery-laden circles in this country. She practised what she preached and rendered service, both menial and intellectual—especially of the former variety, which no woman of her race had ever done on this side of the globe. She offered the purest devotion at the shrine of the Mahatma and found the longed-for peace which she never found in the materialistic West.

London gossip-writers sarcastically referred to the "Three Graces of Gandhi!" They maliciously sandwiched Neela Naginidevi alias Mrs. Cram Cooke between Sarojini Naidu and Miraben. It was not correct, much less proper and courteous to form that trinity with that strange mix-up of Neela Naginidevi and associate it with Gandhiji. The

writer recalls a remark of Glover, the representative of the Associated Press of America, immediately after the round-up of the Congress leaders when the Quit India resolution was passed in Bombay. "What we Americans cannot understand about your Mahatma is his statement that he will negotiate and even go on a mission of peace to Japan though we quite realise his deep sincerity and great character. To us Americans to have anything to do with Japan now is an act of treason." "In that case," retorted the writer "you have not yet understood the Mahatma's philosophy. You need not look aghast even if he parleys with the devil, when he thinks he will convert even him and that there is none in this world so evil-minded as cannot be reformed. Take the instance of Neela Naginidevi. She was an unadulterated foreign adventuress. In modern parlance she would have been dubbed a fifth-columnist. Before she went up to Gandhi she was accused of all sorts of things. The Mahatma was warned not to touch her even with a pair of tongs. But he almost took her into his bosom, in the sense she was welcomed and treated in a manner in the Ashram with an amount of kindness, charity and generosity as would really become a Mahatma! What was the result of it all! She walked away one fine morning and wrote a book calling him almost a pervert and a blackguard. That is the way of the Mahatma. Even now he entertains no ill-will against her and hopes she will repent for her past misdemeanours. She will get a right royal welcome from him even if she returned to him unrepentant." Glover was touched by this woman's episode; but he remained unconvinced about the Japanese business; it was still an act of treason for him and for those whom he represented. He had failed to note the depth of the Mahatma's unequivocal condemnation of Japanese aggressive aims. Wise and lanky, Chaplin of the International News Service, a distinguished globe-trotting American newsman with Irish blood in his veins, uncommunicative

## MIRABEN

Morris of the United Press of America and Bill Fisher of the *Life* and the *Time*, with his infectious smile, all joined in the conversation there, displaying intense interest in that quick-change artist, Neela Naginidevi.

"The Three Graces of Gandhi," no doubt represented all the three types around the Mahatma. Sarojinidevi brought in the real political touch, Miraben sounded the note of utter devotion and unattractive toil and the third imported mere glamour and must have been a most subtle charmer. However, it was not the Mahatma's fault if women poured into and captured his sanctum. Miraben remained the leader and greatest of them all.

Women have influenced revolutions; and revolutions have influenced women as is the case with the Mahatma's campaign on behalf of the women of India. Three women of the past have decisively influenced history; though their influence was neither wholesome nor truly patriotic. Those were the three queens who started the three biggest revolutions in the world's history. King Charles I would not have lost his head and started the Puritan Revolution but for the sad fate of his French consort, Henrietta, saturated with the idea of tyranny. The Austrian princess who was Marie Antoniette, was the fateful evil genius of Louis XVI; she could not endure the thought of concessions with the result that both ultimately mounted the scaffold. Alexandra, the German wife of Czar Nicholas, decisively influenced the history of Russia and ultimately lighted the flame of the Russian Revolution. Centuries separated these three women but they possessed common failings and contributed factors for the rise of the three biggest mass insurrections.

Turning to the vast sub-continent of Hindustan we note that Gandhi revolutionised the thought and action and the mode of life of the Indian women. He accomplished a great deal of his work through the women of the soil who

owed him an imperishable debt of gratitude for breaking their shackles in the mass campaigns he waged against British Power in India. He exalted the peasant woman and taught simplicity to the society woman. The Hindu woman, subjected for centuries now drank deep at the fountain of freedom inspired by his simple words. Hundreds of Muslim women sheltered behind the Purdah came out with a vengeance, defying communalist leadership. They could not resist the onrush of freedom in which their Hindu sisters indulged. The Parsi woman perhaps a confusion of both the East and the West failed not to make her contribution towards national freedom. The Indian Christian woman who generally forgot her surroundings and sometimes even the colour of her skin was forced to line up with her other sisters, however small was the measure of her contribution. Goebbels has declared that it has often been mainly through the women that Nazism has been saved at critical moments. In India, the women were inspired by Gandhi, and they constituted the mainstay and back-ground of the Mahatma's campaigns.

Miraben now adorned the vanguard of women fighting for the freedom of Hindustan though her colour was different from that of the daughters of the soil. She thought, felt and acted like the Indian woman, specially like the peasant woman with whose unhappy lot she wholeheartedly identified herself. Keyserling after a tour of the East preceded by a peep into the West came to the conclusion that one can become anything except an Englishman if one has not been born one! Miraben, an English woman, with aristocratic, blue-blood in her veins, renounced the ways for which British women are notorious in India and turned more Indian than an Indian. She gave up teas and dances and other frivolities for the labours and prayers, the hardships and miseries of the village women of India. One book changed the aspect of her life and carried her to Gandhi's Ashram! If ever the perusal of a book revolutionised the

ways of a man's or woman's life, it was Mademoiselle Madeline Slade's! She had loved music and art and Beethoven's music conveyed plenty of hope to her. The war had shattered her delusions and dissatisfaction reigned supreme in her life. Just then she read Romain Rolland's *Life of Beethoven* and immediately yearned to meet the author. But the barrier of language threatened to spoil her zest. Romain Rolland could speak and write only in French, and he did not know English at all. Miss Madeline Slade realised the imperative need of a wide knowledge of French to be in communion with the French master of thought. She, therefore, went over to Switzerland and Paris and spent considerable time in studying French. She rapidly devoured Romain Rolland's ten French volumes of *Jean Christophe*. That led to an appointment with the great author; she was not satisfied. It was followed by a present from Rolland of one of his books on music. Another visit followed when she was told of his having just written a book on Gandhi whom he hailed to her "as a second Christ." Soon after she went to Egypt and the memorable book was out by the time she returned from her first trip to the Orient.

Perusal of the book was a revelation to the young Admiral's daughter. She was convinced that Gandhi was the right man whom she had been looking for all this time. She had heard of his name for the first time from Rolland. By now, she did realise that Gandhi was the man who would enable her to find the peace and quietness she looked for in vain in the West. Acting on impulse, she immediately booked a passage to India which she cancelled on realising that she would not be able to fit in at once with a kind of life around the Mahatma which enjoined training and discipline. It now took her a year in preparing for a mission to the East which she fulfilled by a strict course in eating and drinking and sleeping on the floor, besides learning to spin and weave. The marvellous thing about it all

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

was that her mother sympathised with her and her father was exceedingly kind to her. Not having met any obstacles from her parents, she sailed for India after a year's training. Prior to this, she wrote to the Mahatma about her joining the Ashram and was assured of a warm welcome. "You shall be my daughter" were the words of welcome addressed by the Mahatma on her arrival. Her meeting with Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi was equally cordial; for she later on served her in Jail where they were companions more than twice. The Mahatma named her after the famous princess in Indian history who renounced the attractions of the court for a life of service.

Miraben found all she hoped for, in her life in the Ashram. In the West, she had found that faith in God had been broken up, and that the bodies and souls of men and women were sold to the highest bidder. She was disgusted with the outlook of the superior classes which was utterly materialistic. Europe was on the brink of destruction. Sensation was piled upon sensation. Everything tended to undermine the decent foundations of Christian civilization as the rape of freedom was not only contemplated but actually committed! Everybody forgot about Christ and their only concern was with sharpening their technique of annihilation. Hurry was the watchword of the West! Quietness and tranquility found no place in their system. The typical story of the Australian woman aviator is revealing. She had mastered flying and scanned the horizons of every continent. One day she landed on the outskirts of the Himalayas where an old and infirm monk was wrapt up in contemplation! "I am just twenty-one and have scaled the mountains and flown over vast seas; there is none to challenge my supremacy!"

"What have you achieved after all?" quietly inquired the old man.

"When I was nineteen," declared the proud young woman, "I flew from Australia to Karachi at the rate of 200

miles an hour. When I was 20, I flew to London at the speed of 300 miles per hour. To-day I can spin round the world at the rate of 400 miles an hour!" Not even a hair of the old man stirred at the narration of the uncommon achievements of a mere girl! He was accustomed for decades to live a life of contemplation and solitude, away from the turmoil of the world. "Why all this hurry?", with this final cold query, he silenced the flying young lady.

This sort of a world in which Miss Slade felt dazed was the world of the young Australian aviatrix. She turned her back upon it and felt powerfully drawn by the kind of philosophy practised by the ageless monk on the Himalayas. The frightful affection about everything in the dull, dead parlours of London in which thousands of English girls were brought up disgusted her. Miss Slade ran after no mysticism but hungered for the plain, unvarnished practice of real human virtues. In the Ashram no servants waited on her. She was everybody's servant. Poverty was the hall-mark of service. In the practice of celibacy they were out not only to control sex but to subjugate material desires. Acquisition and possession of material things were the vices inborn in the Western system; but in the East she learnt the system of continuous dispossession at its best.

The Ashram had its share of human faults and weaknesses. In the matter of women they had followed the golden mean :—

As for the women, though we scorn and flout 'em,  
We may live with, but cannot live without 'em.

Women therein were resplendent for their virtues but concealed not their foibles. Therein lay the attraction of the Ashram for the women of every race and community. The Mahatma was not the man to keep women away. He made the women the finest vehicles of his greatest movements. Somebody has said that women could not be guilty



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

of reason; for if they really possessed reason, they either drew correct inferences from wrong premises or wrong inferences from correct premises. Then there was the other trouble. Two women never agreed with each other, nor spoke well of each other. Jane Austen's mother used to say of her two daughters, Cassandra and Jane—the former being the novelist's senior by four years:—"If Cassandra were going to have her head cut off, Jane would insist on sharing her fate." When something went wrong among the women inmates of the Ashram, the Mahatma interfered and his hand fell heavily though mercifully on the miscreant, even on dear old Kasturba, his beloved consort. The worst punishment that could fall to anyone's lot was a transfer from the Mahatma's presence to another place of constructive activity. In that manner people were reprov-ed; for after all love and charity were the twin cords that bound them all together into an indissoluble society.

Miraben courted imprisonment on four occasions. Once she was jailed for conveying correct information of the events in India to England. She collected a mass of material about the unparalleled repression by the bureaucracy in India. Once she refused to quit Bombay and was jailed. The periods of her imprisonment were well spent in the study of the works of Indian philosophy, Hindu scriptures, Buddhist tracts and the reading of Koran, from cover to cover. Her Ashram life from 4 o'clock in the morning to 10 in the night was a period of unremitting toil, such as spinning and weaving, long marches on dusty roads, talks with villagers, preparing Mahatma's food, looking to his correspondence and helping him in editing his papers. When the late Mahadevbhai or Pyarelal or Mashruwalla was not available, she diligently executed the Mahatma's most responsible secretarial duties. Has not Trotsky narrated that Krupskaja efficiently discharged the job of secretary to her great husband, Lenin, during his continental exile. Miraben roamed the villages of Hindustan from the

## MIRABEN

south to the north, talking and discussing and instructing the villagers and though the dust made her fine complexion swarthy she retained the charm of her Oxford accent. She wore the coarse hand-spun Khadi sari and shaved the hair of her head, looking like a typical Hindu widow. "I have some trouble with my hair; hence I had my head bobbed," was the lame excuse tendered to Gandhiji by a sophisticated woman, the wife of a well-known Congress Minister. "Why not have a clean shave of the hair like Miraben?" retorted the Mahatma, who always puts in the last telling word on any topic.

"I am too much interested in the book of life to read any book," was Miraben's characteristic reply to a newspaper man. "Gandhi is a sermon in himself and I strive to practise his teachings." The transformation of Miraben's life from the life in the idle, gossip-prattling drawing rooms of the West End of London to the life of penury and service in and around Sabarmati Ashram, and later from Wardha to the Frontier, is one of the most striking romances of the modern world. She is a unique woman. As the special messenger of the Mahatma she has not only carried messages of importance but gone from village to village conveying his message of love and service to the downtrodden millions of Hindustan.





**SAROJINI NAIDU**



## SAROJINI NAIDU

**F**IFTEEN years ago there sat the parent of the last British Parliamentary Joint Committee on Indian Affairs, considering the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. The Committee Room overlooking the Thames presented a romantic setting, filled as it was with unique representation of light and colour and personality from the East and the West. In contrast to the complete lack of interest evinced in India in the doings of the Committee of 1933 under the presidentship of Marquis Linlithgow, the proceedings of the Committee of 1919 evoked intense interest. One day the voice of a Nightingale charmed the Committee of 1911—that voice for ever will remain a classic of feminism in this country. At the end of the evidence tendered by the charming lady, preceded by her memorandum demanding equality for Indian women, the Chairman, Lord Selborne, placid and dignified and just unto every interest, the very father of the idea of a Joint Committee, rose and declared:—"Madam, we are grateful for the poetic touch you have brought to our prosaic proceedings." The compliment of the ex-Governor General of South Africa has not yet lost the edge of its fascination in its reiteration throughout the world. The Indian poetess manifests in her personality that her countrymen are "a remarkable combination of the prose of fact with the poetry of idealism." Shrimati Sarojini Naidu ever imports the poetic touch into the prosaic life of Indian politics.

A decade later the poetic touch was requisitioned for a historic scene in the Viceregal drawing room. Two great men were meeting and the representative of Hindustan knew not how to begin. Irwin (now blossomed into Halifax) and Gandhi when they met to negotiate, sat silent and dumb. In the beginning, they were at a loss how to get on. At last, the Mahatma boldly hit it off by opening a book in

his hand and reading out a few poems. Irwin raptly listened. The soul of the Indian poetess rendered possible the preliminary contact of the British and Indian ambassadors. The image of Mrs. Naidu served as the precursor of the historic negotiations which concluded in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931. A great painter could use his brush and paint that magnificent scene for the everlasting use of posterity.

Sarojini Naidu is the most brilliant star in the galaxy of Indian poetesses, Mirabai, the Queen-Poetess, Muktabai and Toru Dutt. She is the vehicle of the dormant wealth of art in Indian womanhood that has long awaited to break down the barriers concealing it. A rich imagination and a brimming emotion are the twin-gifts with which she dazzles. The innate beauty and patriotism of her poems stir up the soul of India. Through her the link of our famous women lies unbroken. She is the greatest Indian woman since Mirabai to influence our women. She is a poem personified into flesh and bone, a love lyric in human shape, with the essence of humanity embodied in her. She is Maupassant's ideal woman who has neither caste nor race. Her poems are the voice of the East and the West echoing vividly the spirit of the East.

Accident made her a poet and again made her turn from poetry to politics. When only eleven years old, being puzzled to solve an Algebraic problem, she scribbled some lines, which put her on the great high-road of poetic fancy. Sir Edmund Gosse and Arthur Symmons made her poetry known to the West and her maiden effort, *The Golden Threshold*, ran into more than ten editions. At thirteen she matriculated and at sixteen she was at King's College, London and Girton's College, Cambridge. She hails from the most brilliant family of Hindustan. The girls in the family were all veritable volcanoes of intellect. You will never find the like of that family and that brilliant set of sisters in all India. Whilst so young, Sarojini displayed the

gifts of Mary, Queen of Scots, who at thirteen recited before the entire French Court a speech in Latin composed by herself.

An accident again broadened Sarojini's vision, which made her fling her poetry into the turbulent stream of politics. Wells broke a leg at seven and launched on his phenomenal career of reading and writing. But for his convalescence which made him a reader, he should have remained a shop-assistant. Earlier, Ignatius Loyola turned a different man when wounded and founded his famous order. Arthur Symmons presented Sarojini with a book of verse requesting "My dear little girl-poet, read this book of verse and seek inspiration in it." The young Indian poetess perusing those verses under the blue Sussex sky in one of those green Sussex downs came across the line which revolutionised her thought:—"Man is a god who is afraid to be God." Sarojini discarded the songs and phantoms of delight and forgot the abode of Cherubims and Seraphims. The rebel in her flared up, for she was the darling child of her patriotic father, the first Indian Doctor of Science of Edinburgh, Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya, who a couple of decades ago was marched off within twenty-four hours from the Nizam's Dominions. His sturdy independence made him the *bete noire* of the Political Agent there, who got him externed. With the son and the daughter, both poets, the father turned to be a veritable Homer of all the brilliant members of his far-flung family. He held his Court and all the young courtiers dreamed their early dreams within that magic circle. The father bequeathed the Court to his most gifted daughter, who still holds it and she reigns supreme whether it be inside or out of jail, the palace or in the hut. The great father's genius was mostly imparted to the son and daughter, Sarojini and Harin, who between themselves wrote all the poetry of Hindustan during the last three decades, excepting Tagore's immortal verses. "Sarojini" as Tagore always affectionately called her was his favourite.



## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

She presided at the mammoth Calcutta meeting called to express Bengal's sorrow on his death. Young Sarojini was fired by the truth of her instructor who advised her that "when the house is on fire, the poet must cease singing and go to fetch water." She obeyed the call of the Motherland and forthwith dedicated her life to her. Like Milton she gave to politics, "the equipment which he had meant for poetry."

Mrs. Naidu's melody of speech pours out exquisite pearls of thought. She is the Wandering Minstrel of Ind singing the joys and sorrows of her Motherland from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. She is the messenger of her Master, whose supreme word she carried from town to village, from peasant to prince. Her speeches are wrought in flowery language. Her language is laden with sweetness and the hardest heart melts in face of her sweeping appeal to emotion. Spenser's verse eminently applies to her:—

Her words were like a stream of honey fleeting,  
Which doth softly trickle from the hive;  
Able to melt the hearer's heart unweeting,  
And eke to make the dead man alive.

Her flowing stream of eloquence attracts crowded audiences wherever she goes. She has roamed all over India and Ceylon, toured all the countries of the globe, lectured extensively on the Continent and America, and thus has not left untraversed any place of importance. The young run to hear her and the old delight to be moved by her swaying tongue. She is the idol of students who love to honour her. As a fascinating wielder of three languages, English, Hindi and Urdu, she can cover the length and breadth of India and penetrate the heart of masses of any community or race. She can speak on all topics under the sun; she can interest you even when she strays from her subject. She will set fire to your emotion and enthusiasm without clouding your reason. There is no woman throughout the East who can be her rival for sheer rhetoric

## SAROJINI NAIDU

and passionate appeal; you will have to search hard for her equal in the West. A snap of her fingers and the bustle is over; a slight look around, she will hold hundred mouths shut. Therein is her commanding influence as a master of the platforms.

You will find Sarojini Naidu either presiding at a function or proposing a vote of thanks. She is listed at the top or at the bottom, to open or conclude. She shines in both capacities; for she does not seek to dominate or lead. She only inspires and fires the enthusiasm. Twenty-five years ago she sprang into prominence as the President of the Madras Provincial Conference at Conjeevaram. Her presidentship galvanised South Indian politics and from thence was launched her ever-expanding career of public service. For years she presided over the Congress destinies in her adopted city of Bombay and then she jumped into the Presidential Chair of the Indian National Congress. No Indian woman before or after her captured that coveted place. The woes of her countrymen in subjugated Africa summoned her there as the President of their Congress. The All-India Women's Conference have installed her twice in their chair. The women of the Orient assembled in their Conference acclaimed her as their spokesman when she was in gaol.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu is the poetess-politician-peace-maker of Hindustan and the melting-pot of our communal differences. She has heroically striven for a Hindu-Muslim entente and conspicuously plays the role of a peace-maker. Her greatest ambition is to weld the brain and brawn of India into a harmonious and compact entity. She is the most glorious product of Eastern and Western cultures and India cannot find another person more fitted to play the role of ambassador abroad. The World's greatest living woman orator thundered in New York, when she visited the Republic whose daughter, Katherine Mayo, shamefully attacked the womanhood of India.

"We ask for sympathy from no element in the West. We trust no element in the West. We trust no element in England, not the most liberal element; for the simple reason that British Liberal, Labour or Tory cannot afford to let India go. We take no begging bowl but shall stand on our own strength."

One and all claim Mrs. Naidu as being their own. The Brahmins would have her by right of her birth. The non-Brahmins and Madrasis claim her through her marriage and surname. The Bengalis look to her through her stock and lineage. The Muslims honour her for her Urdu culture and pro-Muslim sympathies. The foremost Muslim ruler of Hindustan commands her allegiance. Christians admire her for her knowledge of Christianity and love for her peoples. The present writer once took her to a crowded Christian gathering, which included padres, who unanimously held that a sermon by the best preacher could not have been half so good as her speech that night. Bombay proudly gathers her in her fold on the ground that she has adopted the city. The English honour her for being the most facile wielder of their tongue. She is the most welcome personality in the haunts of the prince and the peasant, loyalist or extremist, Christian or Gentile, Hindu or Muslim. Mrs. Naidu is the one person who has met and mixed with more persons, of varying callings than anyone else in India, without however losing her identity. Everyone needs her. If there are rebels in the Congress, she is the messenger of peace between the orthodox and heterodox sections. If the Muslims wage war against the Hindus, she acts as the angel of goodwill between the two communities. The Princes find her eminently suited to establish understanding between nationalists and themselves. Even the adherents of John Bull respect her as an ambassador of peace and forget that she has been jailed four times in her fight against their authority. She is the citizen of the world and denizen of every corner. She adorns the centre, broadcasting her light and sweetness.

It is impossible not to like Mrs. Naidu when you meet her; and there are many who will tell you that to know her intimately is to love her profoundly. She was the president and patron of the smartest set in town. Her drawing-room in the old days at the Taj Mahal Hotel was the rendezvous of young men and ladies. She was the centre of attraction to them all, confiding in her their confidence and little intimacies. She is one of those persons from whom you would like to hide nothing. She is the guide, philosopher and friend of the youngsters who go to her when beset with difficulties. When confidence is reposed in her, it does not strike her friends that:—"Oil and water, woman and a secret are hostile properties." They run to her straightway. She is the sunshine of youth. "What is charm exactly?" asked the father in Barrie's *What Every Woman Knows*, and the young lady replied:—"Oh! it's a sort of bloom on a woman. If you have it, you don't need to have anything else; and if you don't have it, it doesn't matter what else you have. Some women, the few have charm for all; and most have charm for one. But some have for none." Mrs. Naidu belongs to the elect of few, having charm for all. Men cannot withstand the artillery of a magnificent woman's charms; and Sarojini does not presume to wear undeserved dignity. Robert Bernays, the young Liberal M.P. addresses her as his "girl friend" in his *Naked Fakir*.

Gandhi always has her around: even now she is with him in prison. It is a treat to see how they chaff and parry strokes. When besieged with all sorts of visitors for almost twenty-four hours of the day and night, Mrs. Naidu like a ministering angel will tell the Mahatma that what he needs is a long voyage to give him a little rest. Gandhi will outshine her. "I would love it if a lady like you accompanied me." Once the Bombay students asked the Mahatma to address them. "Give me a purse of Rs. 2,000 for the Harijan Funds," replied the Mahatma. The boys were at their wits' end. They consulted Mrs. Naidu. "Why do you go to that

*Bania*," she reproved. "He is out to grab money." "You would amass a fortune," put in the writer, "if you were to levy fees; for you are in such great demand amongst students." The poetess rose to the occasion. "That fellow there is a *Bania*," she retorted, pointing at the small room in which the Mahatma sat, in "Mani Bhuvan," Bombay. With a fine sweep of her hands she finished it all. "He is a *Bania* but I am a *Brahmin*; I give away and do not take."

None can talk like her; her conversation is a rare treat. She is the most brilliant talker, leading but not dominating, attractive without being vulgar, smart without giving anyone a rap on the knuckles. A grand conversationalist, peerless in fun and repartee; she can relate anecdotes against others and sometimes even against herself and hold you absorbed with humour twinkling in her eyes. She may be no beauty; but the story of her charm flits across the oceans and continents. Beauty is not charm; both are different commodities. Charm, however, outlives beauty and can gloriously thrive without it to confer lasting happiness on those around the proud possessor. Who will ever take her place? A person of her type is a rarity amongst whole generations of people.

One of the great hostesses of the country, she entertains a crowd of conflicting personalities. From film stars, feminist leaders to warring politicians and maharajas, the whole tribe goes to her to be entertained and cordially treated. The late John Barrymore could not have found a more charming hostess in India than the Indian poetess. Somerset Maugham lavished his novelist's adjectives on her. Mrs. Naidu's rooms in the Taj constituted an attractive court, where young ladies went like young debutantes. She brought the right note on a festive occasion when youth called out youth. She will laugh with you when you laugh and cheer you up when you are downhearted. She once chided Nariman for making a serious speech when Jahauri, one of the leading Congress workers of the city and the Mem-

ber of the Legislative Assembly from Benares, was married; he died only this month (February 1943) immediately after his release from prison where he was kept as a Detenue. She trotted in correct style. She thought it was nothing but youth calling youth, love calling love, today calling tomorrow! She blessed the couple and "rewarded" the ex-Bombay Congress President by hoping that before the next Flag Salutation function arrived they would be celebrating a similar function, when the bridegroom would be no other than Nariman himself! Nariman is yet a merry bachelor!

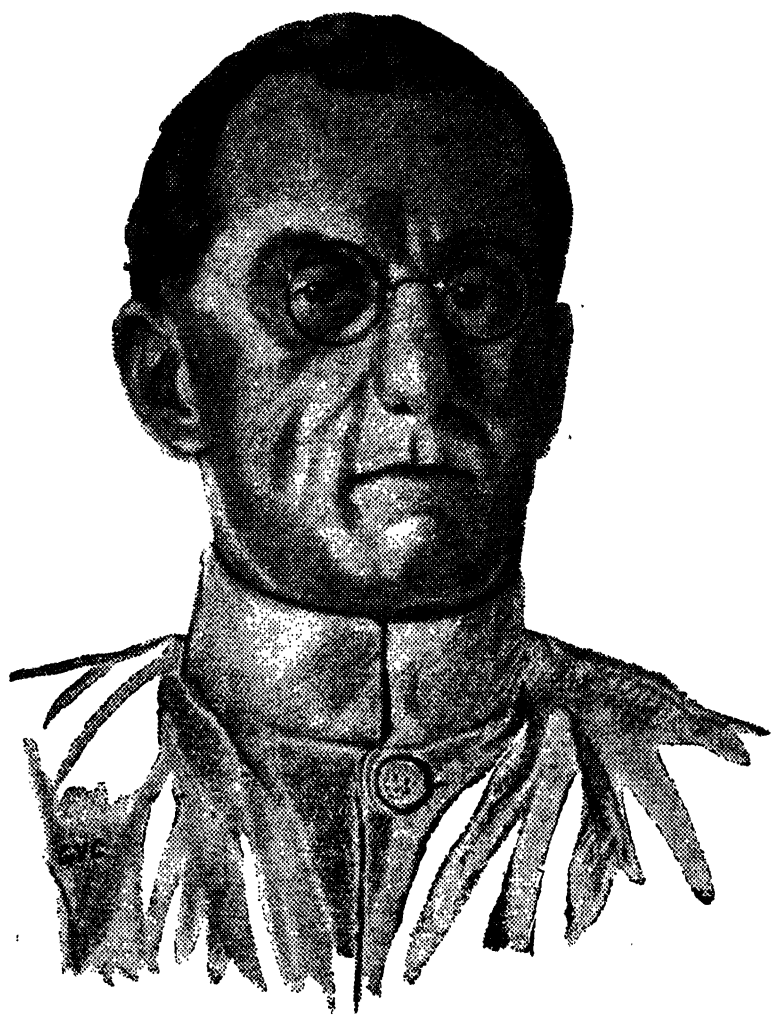
She is the picturesque coiner of names and phrases, Gokhale called Jinnah the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity; she improved upon it and called him the finest ambassador of H.-M. unity! Later she turned round and addressed him as Jinnah Baba! When Gandhiji and Chiang-Kai-Shek met she compared the meeting to Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck conferring with each other.

Mrs. Naidu, the poetess, who burns with the fever of political life in her is the surest condemnation of British rule in this country. What could not a Free India have conferred on her? Poetry, culture and the beautiful she relegated to a secondary place so that she could wage battle against the iniquities heaped on her oppressed countrymen. Fancy her gruelling fight with the Police when she "raided" the Dharasana Salt Works after the Dandi March in 1930, where they deprived her of water and food and encircled her in a cordon. "We shall sit there till Doomsday," was her spirited answer when she contemptuously refused to go out of the ring to buy her "freedom" and sat firm under the scorching sun. Yet her humour did not fail her in that grim battle, with hordes of Police around her. She chaffed them good-humouredly for their "Satyagraha." What else is she if not the representative of our women, sacrificing their domestic bliss and stationed in the front. They forsook their joy and happiness for the ills of a life of struggle against stupendous

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

forces. Sarojini Naidu is the soul of Indian womanhood, the expression of their grace, strength and beauty. Longfellow's verse dedicated to the memory of Florence Nightingale smartly sits on our own Nightingale:—

Wear a lily in the hand,  
Gates of brass will not withstand,  
One touch of thy magic wand.



**KHURSHED FRAMJI NARIMAN**





## KHURSHED FRAMJI NARIMAN

**"L**OOK at the Back Bay"! fired that turbulent young Communist of the Bombay Youth League at its first sessions at the Cowasji Jehangir Hall in 1928 when the choice of the president was decided upon, "and blindly vote for Nariman. As long as the Back Bay exists, Nariman shall flourish." Courageous and patriotic, Soli Batliwala's proposal was acclaimed with applause and the leader of youths was elected without a single dissentient voice. Nariman's name shall be remembered by the Bombay citizens even after the effects of the monumental folly of Lord Lloyd have been obliterated. Narimans and Back Bays are co-existent terms, the former annihilating the latter. His is a name that connotes cleansing up, ruthlessly exposing and denouncing men who have tainted their hands with corruption. Had he been the citizen of ancient Rome, he would have been hailed as the captain of "the young men fastening themselves on malefactors like high-bred whelps on wild beasts."

Solon was once asked what city was best to live in. The reply of the great Athenian statesman and law-giver of antiquity was significant:—"That city in which those who are not wronged, no less than those who are wronged exert themselves to punish the wrong-doers." Nariman's name spelt terror to the brood of malefactors. He spared no effort, energy and money to relentlessly pursue them all. No man who has suffered violence, injury or been the victim of scandalous transactions has gone to him for aid and come out disappointed. The present writer gratefully recalls his experience as a student when he was the victim of assault, intimidation and insult at the hands of two Englishmen and a lady, the last of whom capped it all by gratuitously flinging an ephithet on the head of the writer that he was "a

dirty-Native" Nariman's aid was immediately sought and a criminal complaint lodged. The three English people scented before long that Nariman had his finger in the case and by the time the case was called up before the Chief Presidency Magistrate, an abject apology in writing was tendered which received the sanction of the one who struck awe in the hearts of wrong-doers. Nariman was the counsel for the Elphinstone College Hostelites when they were engaged in a row with their "white" neighbours across the road. The students presented him an address expressing their sense of gratitude. The Congress leader is just like Marcus Cato who went on impeaching malefactors upto the age of ninety. Though this distinguished advocate and Commander of the Roman Republic chiefly devoted his energies to a military career he seemed

"to have regarded the impeachment and conviction of malefactors as a department worthy of his most zealous efforts . . . he brought many prosecutions himself, assisted others in bringing theirs and even instigated some to begin prosecutions."

The Harvey-Nariman Libel Case constitutes the finest episode of Nariman's career. His prosecution, initiated, aided and abetted by the bureaucracy is one of the shameless and discreditable chapters of British rule in this country. They sought to muzzle an inconvenient critic of the Development Department which he openly accused of jobbery, fraud, corruption and maladministration. Crores of rupees were wasted and the finances of the Bombay Presidency mortgaged for decades to gratify the caprices of a proconsul who got the sack in Egypt under "Uncle Arthur." Lloyd's dismissal from his Egyptian job, to quote the telling phraseology of the ex-Foreign Secretary, the late Mr. Arthur Henderson when he replied to Winston Churchill's queries about his protege in the Commons was "an invitation to terminate position." Nariman was prosecuted and persecuted for his allegations of bribery, corruption, favouritism and graft, which however, ended in his triumphant acquittal

after the most protracted hearing of his case. Greed and grabbing seldom witnessed in the annals of modern civilization made up the history of the Bombay Development Department and Nariman glorified in the appellation flung at him that he was the "Finest Development Scandal-Monger." The Harvey-Nariman case is one of the great historic trials, for it occupied 62 hearings, 18 hearings of which were devoted to the cross-examination of the complainant, comprising over one hundred hours. In his cross-examination, Nariman lashed out mercilessly at the complainant; and smote him hip and thigh. He fought like a hero against the whole machinery of Government pitted against him. He conducted his own defence throughout, whilst the bureaucracy paid out Rs. 60,000 from the public exchequer to one of its officers to launch an unsuccessful prosecution for libel against a tried public worker. The prosecution had everything it wanted—books, documents, papers and files. Nariman was hopelessly handicapped with witnesses unwilling to come forward in his defence. Anyone who watched him as the present writer did during the entire period of that trial, must have seen at once that he was the master of facts, despite machinations and chicanery banded to oppose him at every stage. He possessed the essentials of the job at his finger-tips and it seemed that he could be only thwarted in his noble mission by someone who knew the job better than he.

"I want no leniency from any court whatever. I wish to stand on my own rights," were his words of defiance. "I have not been allowed to ask just and legitimate questions. I do not, however, want special treatment and no better than would be meted out to Pandit Tukaram or the meanest citizen of the city."

The dice was so heavily loaded against Nariman that it seemed almost a miracle that he won and proved as the Magistrate said, that some officers of the Department were corrupt!

The writer asked Mr. Surveyor, the Civil Engineer who helped Nariman throughout the trial with his expert advice and later on compiled a book of the case as to how he happened to co-operate with Nariman. It was an odd toss of the dice which brought the two together. Surveyor attended the Back Bay Committee meetings, when Nariman was a witness. He found that one of the members was leading him into 'trouble' which resulted in the prosecution. "This is no good," decided Surveyor. "I shall help him." He forthwith went to Nariman and offered his services. Having made himself obnoxious to the bureaucracy for his ruthless exposures, Nariman faced the great trial single-handed with all the odds against him and triumphed. He exposed corruption and jobbery to the hilt. The comic aspect of the case was that the late Sir Lawless Hepper, the ex-Chief of the Development Department against whom Nariman filed a case for defamation bolted away before summons was issued to him. He never returned to India. Only Harvey was left to eat the humble pie of the libel case. Until the case, Nariman possessed a purely local reputation; the end of it gave him a national standing. Nariman made generations of Bombay citizens incalculably indebted to him for his imperishable services in laying bare a great scandal. Marine Drive, Bombay's finest sea-front, should have been named Nariman Drive. He was thrust in the dock by an unscrupulous bureaucracy; but the accused succeeded in turning the tables and putting the Government on trial, through which process it came out tainted and battered.

Nariman's course in public life has been straight as a die. Neither deviation from public duty nor a deterioration of the right has been known of him. His sense of duty wins him the respect of friends and foes alike. He is not over-zealous as his timid opponents would put it down nor timid as some of his enthusiastic adherents would say. Wiseacres have shuddered at his daring political exploits; for timidity

is the badge of their race. Courage, they say, is glorified foolhardiness and recklessness. Nariman's choice is well-known. Courage to him is preferable inertia and helplessness.

“ . . . Yet better the excess  
Than the defect—better the more than the less;  
Better like Hector in the field to die,  
Than like a perfumed Paris turn and fly.”

You will never find Nariman in the rearguard. He is in his true element in the vanguard of the fight. Freedom and liberty are the very breath of his nostrils and he will die fighting unto the last for their cause. Uncharitable people thought that as President of the Youth League he was a mere fire-eater, hurling defiance at everyone without the ghost of a chance of offering stern battle. But when the call came he flung himself into the fray and the declaration of Independence at Lahore found him the first soldier of Bombay ready to take up arms. When the call for battle went forth in 1930, the President of the Bombay Congress shirked his duty and back-slided. Nariman stepped into the breach created by Jamnadas Mehta's desertion of the Congress standard. The Bombay Congress crown went to him as he had not shirked any fight. “The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong,” but this time the prize was simply awarded to the plainest, duty-loving soldier; for on surveying the field, the onlookers saw that he ran straight, without hesitating or faltering. Brilliance was not there; it was a plain task well performed. Eurybiades, a leader of the Spartan fleet in the Hellenic-Persian struggle warned Themistocles, the greatest Athenian admiral of antiquity that “those who start too soon at the games get a caning.” “Yes,” retorted the Hellenic Naval commander who routed the Persian forces at Salamis, “but those who lag behind get no crown.” The Back Bay hero wrested the Bombay Presidential crown that could never be the reward of those that lagged behind. He was first in the

race and headed the list of the non-violent forces mobilised after Dandi in Bombay. He led the "Salt-Law-Breakers" and played his innings in magnificent style.

Courage, honesty and sincerity have invested Nariman with his present unique position in the city. He is honest and outspoken; and his adventures have invested him with colour and dash. He is the most popular Bombay citizen. A poll would reveal his amazing popularity. There is not a single man nor woman in any corner of the city who has not heard his name. Whenever, he stood for election, either to the Council or the Corporation, he topped the lists of the elected ones. It was an irony of fate that he left out his name from the roll after his candidature to the Central Legislative Assembly was announced from the city Constituency on the Congress Parliamentary Board ticket. Had he stood, he would undoubtedly have beaten all the candidates and prevented that terrific misunderstanding between him and Sirdar Vallabhbhai Patel.

People outside Bombay may not realise what Nariman is to Bombay; his position is singular and peculiar. For long he could not be divested of the Congress presidential crown for the simple reason that there was none to replace him until Bhulabhai Desai alighted from the Assembly heights. His unanimous election every time for the presidency of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee was a tribute to his popularity both with the Left and the Right. The Bombay Youth League provided him the foot-stool to ascend the top of the Congress hierarchy in the city. Just at the end of his titanic fight in the Back Bay Libel case, the Youth Leaguers looked out for a pilot and found one ready to guide them. He eminently suited them and Nariman found the real outlet for his energies. The Bombay Youth League in its first three years' existence was the most dynamic political organisation of the city, overshadowing the Congress itself. After Dandi, the Youth League coalesced with the Congress and Nariman took over the reins

of the Congress leadership. Time was, when he enquired of friends as to how to get into the All-India Congress Committee. Later he led the Bombay contingent into the A.I.C.C. He did not blow hot and cold in the same breath; when Congressmen were ordered out of the legislatures, Nariman instantaneously resigned his seat, thanking the Lord for having safely taken him away from the glamour of the old Club-House. As leader of the Congress ranks in the Bombay Legislative Council, he was a model of discipline. He got out when others hesitated to spurn the *temples of maya*!

Nariman darted back into his saddle in 1934 despite his denunciation in unmeasured yet uncharitable terms of Gandhi's leadership of the Civil Disobedience movement in 1933. Opponents thought that a "mere incense-swinger at Gandhi's shrine" who owed his position to the Mahatma dare not criticise him and openly lay his fingers on the tender spots of his leadership. In his booklet, *Whither Congress*, written after his release in 1933, Nariman shone in the role of an iconoclast after having appeared in different roles before the public—a lawyer, political agitator, Corporator, Councillor, actor in the Development drama, illicit salt manufacturer, etc. This time he was out to ruthlessly stamp out spiritualism, idealism, mysticism and all other "isms." Nariman wrote that "a man of super-human will-power is dangerous both as friend and foe" intent to point out the weakness of the Mahatma's politics.

"Time was," he said, quoting extracts from a Government Report, "when from the early stage of the first Civil Disobedience campaign 20 p.c. of the whole population of the city were actually Congress workers or sympathisers, 70 p.c. more were for one reason or another hostile to police (sole visible authority of Government); of the remaining 10 p.c. exclusive of Government servants, the majority were content to look on and laugh."

The Crown Prosecutor in a case bore excellent testimony to the extraordinary efficiency of one of the Congress activities.



"The Bombay citizen may miss the summer morning sun but never the Congress Bulletin," which evaded all the sleuth-hounds of the police. Nariman mourned that all had vanished after the Mahatma's successful "hunger-strike unto death" in Yeravda Jail. He wanted the Mahatma to put an end to the promptings of his "inner voice," his "divine defects," his "virtuous faults" and to show forth more of practical realism in politics.

All began to be over with Nariman; knocking him off the pedestal was an easy job after his condemnation of Gandhi's methods. However, Nariman's popularity remained as firm as ever. He was more listened to than anyone else, though people did not relish his attacks on the Mahatma. Nariman remained where he was. None dared to thrust him down for his unpleasant criticism until the fight for the Premiership ensued. Whilst retaining his position unimpaired in the esteem and confidence of the public, Nariman was liable to criticism. In offering battle to the enemy he was the strongest force to be reckoned with; but he displayed weakness to a point of impotence in curbing forces within. He did not bring the vigour of the strong man in controlling the affairs of the B.P.C.C. Nariman smiled all-round and hated the idea of being hard on anyone, until his own position was jeopardised.

Nariman measured swords with the wrong man in his contest for the Premier's crown. Sirdar Vallabhbhai resolutely decided to knock him off from the leadership of the Bombay Congress Legislature Party. Nariman was punished not so much for his sins of commission as for those of omission! He may have done many things but he had left many things undone also. That was the gravamen of the charge against him. He was not shrewd enough to burn incense at the Sirdar's shrine, which Munshi was assiduously doing. It is easy to capture a peasant's heart. The Sirdar was not a man to mince words; half-measures never appealed to him. Nariman went the wrong way and Munshi was:

determined in not letting Nariman win the crown even if he failed in getting it himself. The present writer recalls how a cryptic remark of one of the Congress Ministers on the fateful day of the election of the leader of the Bombay Congress Party proved too true. "It will be neither Nariman nor Munshi—that's the Sirdar's decision," and he said it at the very doorsteps of the Sirdar's house. The writer met Nariman barely two hours before the election, at the chambers of Kher, when the former pathetically remarked :—"Alva, it's all over; they won't have me." He was going away; he would not even attend the meeting and thus allowed his whole case to go by default. His own staunch supporters were baffled by his absence.

When once Kher was elected, the tornado of the agitation set in with terrific intensity—those for Nariman and those who upheld the constitutional election of Kher. Bombay was torn into opposite camps and every home in the city talked of Nariman's defeat. Horniman whipped up a raging and tearing pro-Nariman campaign, perhaps one of the fiercest battles ever waged by him in his journalistic career. Horniman's comment to the writer was typical of him :—"I have no love for Nariman nor do I hate the Sirdar. I was a confidante of his brother, Vithalbhai, whom I miss so much now. But in this business a whole lot of principles are involved."

Nariman became a martyr, a hero; but he lost the battle by his failure to keep silent. Having made an excellent start immediately after the reverse, he failed to preserve the martyr's pose! He won all-round sympathy, but he soon exasperated his friends. The Speakership of the Bombay Legislative Assembly was ear-marked for him and even the Sirdar was generously backing his claim for that exalted post when Nariman backed the wrong horse and lost everything. The final round of the battle finished him. He asked for an Enquiry Committee and secured it at the hands of Mr. Bahadurji, the ex-Advocate General of Bombay. The

Sirdar was exonerated and Nariman's mistakes confirmed. His own tribunal condemned him !

The trouble with Nariman was that he considered the leadership of the Bombay Congress Party "as his birthright," to put it in the words of Pandit Jawaharlal. On the sheer strength of sacrifice, merit and loyalty, he deserved the crown; he had already ably led the Swarajist forces inside the Bombay Legislative Council. Did not Hector thus address his wife, Andromache, before he set out for the Trojan battle:—

Where heroes war, the foremost place I claim,  
The first in danger as the first in fame.

Munshi, quite a late-comer on the scene, had not hidden his anxiety in the running; his coming-in complicated the situation; though Nariman's claims as against those of Munshi were any day superior. The irony of it was that Munshi's entry in the race having started the trouble made him keep away from it coolly when the dice was loaded against Nariman. Munshi must have muttered:—"Well, I have nothing to do with it all; the gale is fierce and Nariman will be cast into the bottomless depths. I will be somewhere in the picture, if not at the top !" If Nariman had thought less that the prize was his own heritage, the entire aspect of the controversy may have been changed and he may not have been so rudderless as he is to day in politics. Therein lies the tragedy of his failure. The tragedy of that distressing personal episode was that Nariman pulled his horse when it was just leaping out successfully.

Nariman has had his hits and misses in politics. Not many times in hitting out, he has fallen short of the mark. A democrat to the tip of his fingers, with his eye ever on the people, ready to please them at all times, he sometimes overstepped the limits. The public enjoyed that big joke which ex-Commissioner Sir Ardeshir Dalal of the Bombay Corporation scored over Nariman on the eve of a Corpora-

tion general election, even though it was at the expense of a much beloved popular hero. Nariman threatened to lead our Youth Leaguers and occupy a plot of ground near the Mahalakshmi Race Course which he held, was unjustly withdrawn from public use. This time Nariman spoke without his text; and astute Dalal, one of the cleverest men who have adorned the Indian Civil Service and now a Director of Tata Steel Company, effectively retorted. "Nariman is all wrong" he said in effect. "There is no impediment at all. He is welcome with any number of his young fellows to occupy that maidan. No one will prevent the Youth League Leader from indulging his pranks there. There is place wide enough for him, without least hindrance, to go kite-flying on the maidan!"

Nariman is a confirmed bachelor and typical demagogue striding our politics. The writer remembers dining with him one night, when the guest of honour was a prominent Madras Swarajist Legislator, who perhaps finding no hostess around and ignorant whether his host was in a state of single blessedness or double wretchedness, turned round and bluntly asked, "Where is Mrs. Nariman?" The Back Bay hero rose to the occasion. "There is no time," he smartly replied to the guest, "to be busy both at home and abroad!" Like Newton, Nariman has throughout remained a bachelor and "never had the leisure to think about marriage." The scientist poured out his entire life on the laws of gravitation and the ex-Bombay Congress President is too much wedded to politics, prisons and the police to spare time for the entanglements and vicissitudes of matrimony. As a prisoner he carried himself cheerfully and tendered most excellent advice to his fellow-prisoners, "not to be attached to places and persons in prisons lest they be miserable." It is mentally and physically dangerous to neglect this piece of advice whilst one is a prisoner. Old Nagindas Master, Nariman's deputy in the presidentship of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee quoted his "chief" when we were fellow-

prisoners and this must have lightened his burden when he was unjustly punished by the Government of Bombay for being our "ring-leader" in the Nasik Road Prison hunger-strike of 1932. As the merry and daring bachelor, Nariman has penetrated places where others fear to tread. For a long time he was the lonely occupant of Readymoney Mansion at Worli, the huge building with innumerable flats owned by Sir Cowasji Jehangir. Not a single tenant occupied the place as people were scared away by a story of the "existence of ghosts!" Nariman was not the least scared. He simply walked in and made it his comfortable quarters occupying as much space as he could. Other tenants slowly drifted in later and the "ghosts" fled!

Nariman is the ideal demagogue who would kiss babies in mothers' arms to win their suffrage. Therein he combines the merits of a true politician with his virtues of a patriot. A thin audience chills him. It leaves him cold and unenthusiastic. He seeks only big audiences and then he is at his best. He is not an orator. He speaks bluntly, a little harshly putting his points with vigour, without any pretension to eloquence. At Worli, where he put up such a stupendous spectacular show as the "Host-in-Chief of the Indian National Congress of Bombay for the year 1934," he proclaimed that, "Worli which witnessed the invasion of the British Invaders, would also witness their exit through the same gates."

Nariman is thoroughly conversant with the arts and strategy of a successful politician. There is the well-known story of how he cut a wry, depressed face when the representative of an Anglo-Indian paper interviewed him on the morning of a Corporation election, with the result that his evening paper prematurely elated, flashed the poster "The Downfall of the Congress Leader at the Polls." The nationalist voters rushed and flooded the booths in the evening. The posters gave him the ascendancy in the election. When

you first meet Nariman you will find him an easy acquaintance. He has ease of manner and does not appear brusque.

We have amidst us the most gallant knight, ready to throw everything he possesses to the winds for the causes he adorns. After Dandi, he never stepped into a Court of law to keep his pot boiling; whilst those who followed him, flushed with enthusiasm, declared that they would never recognize the King's writ, but lost no time to don the gown, and start practice. After eight years of desertion of the law courts, Nariman stepped in only after the full blast of the Vallabhbhai-Nariman controversy was over. He was very reluctant to get back to the Courts. Either he had to go out on a world-voyage or get married to forget the wounds he suffered from that controversy. It required a lot of inducement to get him back to the Criminal Bar, of which he was definitely one of the leaders. The present writer briefed Nariman in his first case after his eight years' break and gave him more fees than charged by C. N. Kanuga, the top-notch of the Criminal Bar, just to get him back at the Bar and make him forget the unhappy episode of his defeat.

Nariman knows no equivocation; he is a whole-hogger, either to lose or win it all. He minces no words and does nothing half-heartedly; hence there was trouble when he clashed with the Sirdar who possessed superior mettle in the same direction. The Sirdar held out the longest and triumphed; he knew every phase of the game. Nariman is the proud possessor of magnificent pluck and resource, humour and patriotism. The citizens have been thrilled by his exploits, whatever his shortcomings and weaknesses. Bombay still loves him and the city would be poorer without him.





PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU





## PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

**I** AM proud to be the daughter, sister and wife of convicts and hope to be one myself soon," was the most gripping sentence in a letter addressed to the present writer twelve years ago by the first woman Cabinet Minister of Hindustan when her husband was first jailed and she followed him up to preserve the inviolate family tradition. Shrimati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, that rare combination of beauty and brains, lived to fulfil her ambition more than three times and is now a prisoner of the United Provinces Government, whose honoured Minister of Local Self Government she was barely four years ago.

Her aged, infirm and sorrow-stricken mother Swaruparani forged ahead of even the younger members of the family and fiercely ran into the thick of the battle after her great husband was dead and all the members of the family clapped behind prison bars. The late Queen Dowager of "Anand Bhuvan" fought like Boadicea of old and was not in a mood to rest. Her aging head was crowned with bandages, the legacy of a lathi charge. "We shall fight in the last ditch, till the last drop of our blood oozes out of our mortal frame," expressed her resolve. Shades of Clemenceau! When the Germans were about to enter Paris "the French Tiger" desperately determined:—"I will fight in front of Paris, I will fight in Paris, I will fight behind Paris." Swaruparani's beloved boy had often said that he loved fighting and speaking against tyranny and will go on until he shuffles off his mortal coil!

"Anand Bhuvan" emptied all its patrician contents into the prison-houses of the land. The illustrious parents, their world-famous son and his lamented wife, the two talented daughters Vijaya Lakshmi and Krishna and their husbands, all braved the rigours of prison life. Frail but

brave Kamala Nehru, sacrificed her life by undergoing insufferable imprisonment and proved Gandhiji's warning to old Motilal when she was married to Jawaharlal:—"I fear that their wedding garland will become a crown of thorns." Jawaharlal's only beloved child, Oxford educated Indira was wedded last year to the ex-President of London University Socialist Union, Feroze Gandhi. The brave couple showed no hesitation and lined up. Both are at present "His Majesty's Honourable Guests." Search where you will, you will never find an equal of the House of Nehru throughout Hindustan! One of them may proudly repeat the exclamation of the Prince of Wales, now Duke of Windsor, when he set out to fight in the trenches of World War I:—"My father has four sons; why should he be fettered?" With this difference, that all the Nehrus are jailed and none to enjoy the treasured patrimony.

Pandit Jawaharlal is the scion of that sovereign, patrician stock. He is his own heir and leans not for support on the heritage left him by his great father. He has merely inherited it—he neither exploits it, nor thrives on it. His father's farewell message to him must have been somewhat on the lines delivered by the Roman Emperor Otho to his nephew and heir, whom he thus instructed on his death-bed:—"And now my boy, this is my last charge to thee; do not altogether forget and do not too well remember that thou hadst a Caesar for an uncle." Jawaharlal has executed *sans reproche* the dying wishes of his father.

Would fortune have favoured the son had he not been blessed with the prestige of his parent? Being the princely heir of "Anand Bhuvan" carried its advantages and disadvantages. Jawaharlal without his heritage may have been more famous than what he is today. The position he would have enjoyed singly and independently baffles speculation. In the initial stages of his career, it made Jawaharlal known more quickly than any other man. But once on the

run, handicaps weighed him down. The assertiveness and defiance born in him were robbed much of their fire. "Anand Bhuvan" had stolen for him a flying start over every rival in the field. He left behind all that raced with him for a name that could be on the lips of other men. He threw other men into shade by the dazzling power of his meteoric rise. To be famous when comparatively young is the privilege of a demi-god. Jawaharlal's career soared from triumph to triumph, not without raising the head of the green-eyed monster of jealousy. His flaming and bright coloured progress brushed aside lesser men and afflicted them with sore hearts. But he reached the top and found safety from shafts of jealousy, where they lose their point of attack and envy recoils with impotent fury. Grateful enough to be beyond the reach of envy, Jawaharlal was left undisturbed to steer his own bark on the course. He has lived a distinct, real political existence, overshadowed only by two great and powerful figures, that of his father and patron, the Senior Pandit and the Mahatma. He is not a mere imitative but a distinctive figure, not a poor copy but a genuine original.

The father proudly witnessed the progress of his son's popularity. In the zenith of his power, Motilal must have legitimately thought of his only beloved son in the proud terms of Themistocles. The greatest Greek master of naval warfare and victor of Salamis, the most decisive sea engagement of antiquity, referring to his son, said jestingly, "that the boy was the most powerful of all the Hellenes, for the Hellenes were commanded by the Athenians, the Athenians by himself, himself by the boy's mother and the mother by her boy." The Athenian admiral counselled the lad's mother, "therefore let him make sparing use of that authority which makes him, child though he is, the most powerful of Hellenes."

True, the son converted the father into an extremist and made him exchange ease and luxury for the rigours of

prison-life. The fire burning within the soul of his son spread and devoured the moderation of the father and made him bid successfully for the leadership of the flaming hosts of Indian nationalism. It was like Pompey, the powerful rival of Julius Caesar, who flushed with triumphs went over to Metellus, the Roman Proconsul in Gaul and "not only performed wonderful exploits himself, but also fanned into fresh heat and flame the bold and war-like spirit of Metellus which old age was now quenching, just as molten and glowing bronze when poured round that which is cold and rigid, is said to soften it more than fire does, and to melt it also down." That the senior Pandit should have chosen danger instead of dignified ease with more zest than a raw young recruit was proof positive of the miracle worked by the younger Pandit.

But the father wrested the price of his conversion from the son. He transformed his darling boy from the *enfant terrible* of Indian politics into a moderate extremist. He made him Gandhi's *protege*. The Mahatma calmed him down and fashioned the stormy petrel's lyric urge of revolution into a steady rhythm of work. Gandhi checked, delayed and thwarted the smouldering spirit of revolution in the young Pandit. It was one of the Mahatma's triumphs. By a self-denying ordinance, Gandhi declined the Lahore Congress Presidentship of 1929 and cast the garland around Jawaharlal's neck. He hailed him as the ideal hero of nationalist India *sans peur et sans reproche*. The country endorsed the Mahatma's verdict and elected him President of the Congress, at an age when others had scarcely dared to think of it. The bait led Jawaharlal captive into Gandhi's camp. The father dragged his beloved boy into the Mahatma's tent, bound hand and foot. Jawaharlal had rebelled against every authority; had spoken of the "open conspiracy against our rulers"; but melted almost like wax against the conspiracy of twin-rulers over himself. He was sandwiched between a Mahatma and a Pandit! Together

they controlled and decided his political destiny. The double-edged conspiracy of Gandhi and Motilal "hatched" against him prevented his enjoying the fruits of his open rebellion. They cleverly harnessed him to their chariot-wheels and won the race. In short, his freedom was gagged by the very pair of men who made him famous.

The death-bed scene must have been touching, Jawaharlal released and summoned to his father's side must have had to face an exhortation. Motilal realised how a single flourish of the Mahatma's pen had won for his son the Congress Presidential Crown and kept him on the safe side of things. His farewell message to Jawaharlal must have been that that he could fight, remonstrate, persuade, coax and cajole Gandhi as he liked; but he was to give expression to no voice independent of the Mahatma's. Whatever he had to say, even if it breathed fire, blood and thunder, was to be expressed through the Mahatma's voice. Motilal must have brought the two great men together, joined their hands and pronounced the holy blessings of consolidation with the hope that the two would never be cast asunder and that the destinies of his son were safe in the Mahatma's keeping. The first fruit of the union was Jawaharlal's assent to the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, though he had bitterly wept and protested when the news of the settlement was first brought to him on a midnight by Mahatma Gandhi. The 'Fundamental Rights' resolution sponsored by Jawaharlal at the Karachi Congress was a concession he wrung out in turn from the unwilling Mahatma. Sometimes Jawaharlal has presented a pitiable figure torn in the tussle of his loyalty to Gandhi and his faith in Socialism. Yet the Mahatma accomplished the trick of the great reconciler of irreconcilables.

Fate grudged Motilal the unique happiness of being alive to see his son on the top of the Indian political world, dictating nationalist India's foreign policy. The father

entrusted the son to the Mahatma so that he should guide him and save him from the perils and excesses of his bounding enthusiasm for great causes. But he could never have dreamt that the Mahatma would one day publicly proclaim him as his legal heir, brushing aside the claims of all others. This was the first time in Indian politics that a sort of line of succession was announced by a proud progenitor, the greatest of them all. Motilal was never destined to watch his son sky-rocketing to fame, with his *Autobiography* flashing his fame unto the ends of the universe. The father only saw the son ascending the first rungs of the ladder; but the son later broke all records and reached the pinnacle of greatness.

Pandit Jawaharlal is the aristocratic, Harrow and Cambridge lad turned a red-hot revolutionary. Flinging his patrician heritage into the melting-pot, he has dared and revolted, proclaiming rebellion as his only religion. "I have imbibed most of the prejudices of Harrow and Cambridge and in my likes and dislikes, I was perhaps more an Englishman than an Indian." The call of 1920 transformed him completely. A European tour made him the fierce protagonist and pioneer standard-bearer of Independence within the Congress. A visit to Soviet Russia planted the deep roots of Socialism in him and made him hoist the Socialist standard in the Congress. "The exploited and suffering masses must carry on the struggle for their drill-sergeant is hunger," wrote Jawaharlal. He makes no secret of what profound thinkers before him have forecast, of the coming strife between the "House of Have and the House of Want." The spectacle of misery and starvation in the land deeply stirred his heart. He had been striving for the goal of economic justice, political freedom and human brotherhood. Liberty is now his God, reason is his Holy-Ghost, and rebellion his religion. He has loved Justice and Beauty; the former meaning to him equality not only

between nations but classes; and the latter conveying the ideas of sympathy, love and thirst for freedom and progress.

"When all other rights are taken away," pointed out Thomas Paine, "the right of rebellion is made perfect for human beings." Pandit Jawaharlal flourished this weapon like a seasoned warrior. He is the arch-seditionist, perpetually humming his song of Sedition. He delights in the sound of war and is just the fighter to whom the immortal Homer would have assigned a place of honour amongst his warriors, "fond of battle" and "eager for the fray." In his first Congress Presidential address he stoutly denied Parliament's right to dictate to India. He repudiated Britain's right to collect a farthing of our so-called National Debt. He recognised the inherent privilege of fighting with any weapon. "Violence is bad," but he hit the nail on the head, when he bluntly said in his Lahore address, that "Slavery is worse." The Pandit is not enamoured of non-violence. He adopts it as he is helpless. Gandhi would not have freedom with violence. Jawaharlal would not mind violence if it guaranteed his success in battle. There lies the vital difference between the two leaders of the mighty hosts of Indian nationalism. "Don't talk of constitutional means, when we have no constitution," with these words he damned the tribe of constitutionalists.

The West understands his politics and draws the line between him and the Mahatma. They have sympathy for Nehru's aspirations and are slow to understand or appreciate the Mahatma's philosophy. Europe understands the straight and blunt talk of arms and weapons, of blood and thunder of battle. But the Mahatma sails in his own unchartered sea of Truth and Non-violence, which baffles Europe. Pure accident of birth prevented Jawaharlal from being a leader of men in the West.

Pandit Jawaharlal, inheriting his father's likes and dislikes, hates compromise. "I was once a lawyer," he said,



and have now given up quibbling." He would have only two parties and recognises no third one. He is the plain, blunt and fanatical priest of rebellion. He hoists only one standard and whosoever pays no homage to it is welcome to offer allegiance to that of the enemy. There are only two flags, he said, that of Freedom and of British Domination. "Those that are not with us," he clinched his case in Biblical style, "are against us." He will give no quarter to his enemies. There is no room for more than two parties in the country. Being familiar like an expert with the job of revolution, he would draw the line clearly and divide the world into two halves only. Patriots and traitors are the only people that come into Jawaharlal's mental picture. It is his uncompromising spirit which is unhappy with the compromise within the Congress between the landlord and the tenant on one hand, and the industrialist and the worker on the other. He wants to wipe off this compromise and make Congress a radical organisation. He would haul up the landlords and capitalists to render an account of themselves before the tribunal of a National Government. The top-notch capitalists of Bombay once banded together and publicly expressed their anxiety over Jawaharlal's Socialistic leanings. They deemed him a veritable menace to their existence. He just called them names and poured his wrath on them with the description, "the effusions of the fourteen wise men." Jawaharlal was the first man to hoist the banners of Independence and Socialism in the Congress; for that alone he is entitled to a lasting place in our history. Great ideas travel slowly as well as rapidly. But Nehru's ideas of Socialism and Independence went booming through the Indian political world like cannon-shot.

Jawaharlal would make the Congress his lever in adopting Socialism. His Soviet sympathies hark him to the Communist fold but his Communist friends have long ago given him up as a lost soul incapable of redemption. They

wanted him to leave the Congress and work with them. But Jawaharlal recognised the potency of the Congress weapon. He would ride to Socialism on the Congress horse. He is thoroughly conversant with the strategy of warfare and is sure of his objective. Jawaharlal would not plump for the cent per cent Communist programme, though he was completely enamoured of the Russian experiments. Even a hundred active and prominent Communists could not have popularised Russia in this country as the Pandit has done. The first fruit of his visit to the Soviet country was his Independence Resolution at the Madras Congress of 1927. Whenever he went amongst the students and youths, he was questioned about Russia and he wrote as much as he spoke. Yet he discarded the element of violence embedded in the system and realised that he could reach even beyond Moscow in Gandhi's company provided violence was cut out. He agreed to suspend all intense economic struggles until Complete Independence was achieved. Independence was more important than immediate attachment to economic issues. However, he would not have any truck with champions of reaction and exploitation, be they white, brown or black. His crusading zeal set fire to the smug complacency of those who were "unmindful of the terror knocking at our very door." He denounced the whole feudal tribe of Indian Princes and had he possessed the power, he would have consigned all their treaties and Sanads and agreements, clogged by the distressing restraints of the Political Department of the Government of India to the waste-paper basket. He did not even spare the Aga Khan; he pointedly named him and declared that his spiritual supremacy did not warrant his excursions into high politics, detrimental to the interests of the country.

For some time, Pandit Jawaharlal toyed with the idea of Popular Fronts. He spent his best energies in attempting to bridge the gulf between the Right and the Left wings of the Congress. The Old Guard felt that though he was

with them physically, he was not of them; the men on the Left were dissatisfied that he did not boldly champion their cause. He was eminently suited to bridge the gulf but the currents, both internal and external, were against him and upset his plans. Popular fronts and joint fronts broke down in the land of their birth before they could even start operating in India. Jawaharlal was convinced that in India as in every country the middle classes play an indispensable part and that they were relatively strong. He did not want them to embrace the enemy but worked to enlist them on the side of the anti-Imperialist and Political Independence fronts. He would not make presents of them to the enemy.

As the President of the National Congress at Lucknow he boldly proclaimed that the solution of the Indian problem was a part of the world programme. No Congress President had thus spoken. He surveyed all lands from China to Peru and urged the rallying of all anti-Imperialist forces. The Indian struggle for Independence had intimate connections with the Spanish problem, the Chinese War and the Russian experiment. Once the masses of Asia were freed, there was bound to be a lifting of the cruel weight of centuries.

Jawaharlal belongs to the new race of haters who have learnt the bitter lessons that have been burnt into us. He wants to end our wretched existence of being the beaten and oppressed half of this earth. He pants for the return of our own heritage, submerged as it is now in the stark exploitation of the East by the West. His heart eats out in anger, musing on the wrongs of our people, nursing the epic of its revenge. We are the beaten, whipped dogs of an Imperialism, whose cold purpose and determination is to hold on as fast as it can to us until we break down under the weight of its oppression. Our complacent acquiescence must go. Let not rats riot in our ancient structure, fast becoming a no man's territory, blessed with no piece of ground which we can claim as our own to lay our heads

upon. Jawaharlal is out for the stiffest struggle by the largest people against the greatest Imperialism, the world has witnessed.

“Don’t talk of slavery to us, we, who have suffered it for fifteen decades or more under you,” he said indignantly in his last speech on the A.I.C.C. platform before his incarceration in August 1942. “We know what is meant by slavery. It does not lie in your mouth to tell us about your urge for freedom for the occupied European Countries, when you have treacherously denied it to us.”

Such is the brave fighter of India’s freedom, lover of oppressed humanity, now striding our politics. He strides the Continents and is out to consolidate the forces of the oppressed peoples of the world to give final battle to the Imperialist legions. He has witnessed the bombing of Chungking; run into a shelter at Madrid, when the People’s Government fought Franco. In Rome, he flatly declined to meet Signor Mussolini, though the Duce was waiting for him after cancelling an important Cabinet Meeting. Thereby he reprovved the notorious appeasers of the Cliveden Set and formulated a definite code of conduct for all anti-Fascists, whose greatest leader he was. Col. Louis Johnson, the late Personal Representative of President Roosevelt to the Government of India displayed commendable interest in the Indian problem, much to the chagrin of the Whitehall and New Delhi bureaucrats. He offered a plane to Jawaharlal so that he could fly to Washington and parley with the American President. But Nehru did not go. Some American War Correspondents covering Cripps negotiations at Delhi told the present writer that the sale of Jawaharlal’s *Autobiography* would have shot up by a million copies if he had undertaken the American trip; as his book had already become a best seller there. He is the most popular Eastern patriot in America, next to the Mahatma, Tagore and the Chiang Kai Shek couple. Nehru boldly advocates Woodrow Wilson’s ideal of open covenants openly arrived at.

Jawaharlal should have headed a Congress Deputation to America in the middle of 1939, when Congress Ministries were still running the administration of seven out of the eleven provinces of Hindustan. The Deputation should have included Bhulabhai Desai, Sarojini Naidu, who triumphantly toured the States fifteen years ago, Rajagopalachari, Kher and Yusuf Meherally, who have already visited America and lastly Jaiprakash Narayan possessing the proud distinction of being a double graduate of American Universities. Nehru's deputation should have toured the States, when America was far from any European entanglements, much less being actually ranged against the Axis. The fall of France in June 1940 revolutionised the American scene and the Congress missed the bus once it went into the wilderness!

Nehru's wide knowledge, experience and travels fit him to be the Ambassador Extraordinary of Hindustan, to make and tear up treaties, sign agreements and discountenance hostility on behalf of his Motherland. Harold Nicolson, author of *Diplomacy* (himself a trained diplomatist) summed up the requisite qualities of a diplomatist:—

“These then are the qualities of my ideal diplomatist. Truth, accuracy, calm, patience, good temper, modesty and loyalty. These are also the qualities of an ideal diplomatist. But the reader may object, “you have forgotten intelligence, knowledge, discernment, prudence, hospitality, charm, industry, courage and even tact.” I have taken them for granted.”

Jawaharlal may not possess all the qualities enumerated above; for his short temper, impatience and even rudeness to colleagues whom he once dubbed as Gandhi's “rubber stamps,” are well known. But he knows truly well that “the man who would be king” must first of all overcome his own weaknesses. He cannot impose discipline on others which he cannot successfully impose on himself. However, he can be relied upon to rise to any occasion and thus gladden his friends and confound his hostile critics.

Some of his colleagues in the Congress Working Committee have not displayed any enthusiasm for his international aspirations. They are neither infected with his wander-lust nor have they stretched themselves beyond the borders of their own land. Let us mind our own business; our own miseries provide enough pre-occupation for the rest of our lives, is their defence against his idea of a grand world alliance, in which the oppressed peoples of the world will secure a fair deal and war mongers thrown into oblivion. The Mahatma himself is no dabbler in foreign affairs; he has invested Jawaharlal with supreme control of the department for external affairs of the Congress. The Mahatma will only rush in where Jawaharlal fears to tread. He will issue open appeals to Hitler and Tojo; and Nehru would rather walk barefooted to the antipodes than parley with these overlords of Fascism. However, the Mahatma and the Pandit seem to weigh equally in the balance and one unconsciously sets off the other without meaning to provoke any conflict. Together they manage the ideal and practical aspects of our Foreign affairs, and thus please both our mind and heart. Jawaharlal made the Mahatma feel "the misery of the impending ruin of Russia and China," but when the former tried to forget his quarrel with Imperialism because of his sympathies for these two countries, Gandhiji convinced him that without the freedom of India, that of the other two countries was in great danger. In a recent letter addressed to Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy, from the Yeravda Jail, Gandhiji has dubbed Jawaharlal his "measuring rod" in relation to foreign affairs. Gandhiji went on to explain:—

"He dreads much more than I do the success of Fascism and Nazism. I have argued with him for days together. He fought against my position with a passion which I have no words to describe. But the logic of facts overwhelmed him. He yielded when he saw clearly that without the freedom of India, that of the other two was in great jeopardy. Surely you are wrong in having imprisoned such a powerful friend and ally."

Whoever counts on placating Gandhi cannot rule out the Pandit. A solution could be effected only in accordance with Gandhi's powers to rope in Jawaharlal in any scheme. Gandhi's pulling powers can decide the fate of any issue. The decision of the two becomes the decision of the nation. It is true that Jawaharlal in Gandhi's company has pitched his standard low; but he has pulled up Gandhi as no one else has done. Therein is the secret of Jawaharlal's hold over the Congress. His instinct to seize what is best under the circumstances is unrivalled. When he signed his father's Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms, in his capacity as the Secretary of the Congress, he was asked how he reconciled his creed of independence with his adherence to the idea of Dominion Status. He simply replied:—"It is a mistake; it shall soon be rectified." Without any fuss, it was rectified and his position was made impregnable in the left-wing. When Gandhi negotiated for days and nights for a Truce with Lord Irwin, Jawaharlal's soul was restless. He wept bitter tears when the Truce was signed and felt disconsolate. He was prepared to plough the lonely furrow. Gandhi, however, secured his adherence and his dreaded right-or-left-side-lieutenant harangued that "Truce" it was, but a mere prelude to the next fight! They were to keep their weapons in constant readiness. He soon threw himself into the U.P. No-Tax campaign, issued instructions to workers and thus preserved intact the "War mentality." Jawaharlal found it easy to transform the Truce into the terrible struggle that started all over the country. The bureaucracy sought to hang Gandhi on the charge that his protege created an unmanageable situation. Gandhi had not known that his favourite Jawaharlal had been arrested until he sailed into the Arabian Sea and landed at Ballard Pier, Bombay. On his return from the Round Table Conference, he hoped to be greeted by the Pandit on board the ship. The blare of bands, the fanfare of trumpets, the tons of bouquets and garlands, the loud cheering which thrilled

out from thousands of throats, the songs and cries from hundreds of kesari-clad Desha-Sevikas, the ocean of seething humanity, Gandhi-capped and khaddar-clad, (such as had never been witnessed before) on the Bombay Harbour, all these could not make up for Jawaharlal's absence on that dying day of the dying year! The New Year of 1932 presented the gloomiest spectacle. Gandhi's face bore the heavy signs of anxiety and sorrow. He looked "a man beset by a host of cares" and "shadowed with something of the future years."

The Mahatma launched three big offensives to vindicate the political honour of his legal heir. To Gandhi, Jawaharlal's arrests have sounded the call to arms. Motilal was always much disturbed when his son was arrested, so was his fine, gallant mother. But the anxiety of the parents faded before the depth of the Mahatma's sorrow. He watched the political skies and when the bureaucracy laid their hands on Jawaharlal it was time for the Mahatma to sit up, decide and act quickly. The Mahatma quickened the pace of the Dandi March after Jawaharlal was arrested. Ignoring the warmth of the welcome in December 1931 at Bombay he straightaway plunged into thought and made the wires hot between "Mani Bhuvan," Gamdevi and the Viceregal Lodge. He questioned the validity of Jawaharlal's arrest alongside that of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The unsatisfactory and arrogant reply of the late Lord Willingdon precipitated the crisis of 1932. Later when Vinoba Bhave was jailed as the first victim of the Individual Satyagraha Campaign in 1940, Jawaharlal's arrest followed with undue haste. He was fixed up to follow Bhave, the ideal Satyagrahi. Nehru was convicted and the barbarous sentence of four years rigorous imprisonment imposed upon him, stunned the world. The Mahatma summoned the Old Guard to Wardha and forthwith decided to quicken the pace of the struggle. Thrice Gandhiji nearly burst open the national current of protest and action to uphold the prestige



of his accredited heir. He manifested clearly that he could not take Jawaharlal's arrests lying down. An attack on Jawaharlal was a direct challenge flung at him and immediately he counter-attacked with vigour.

Pandit Jawaharlal is stern and autocratic when the occasion calls for it. He possesses that attribute which Maxim Gorki featured about Lenin:—"A leader who is not in some degree a tyrant, is impossible." The father bequeathed his autocratic spirit to the son and also his flair for biting retorts. At the Lahore Congress when someone referred to Pandit Motilal's ruling at the previous Congress and characterised it as autocratic, the son, who had succeeded the father in the chair rushed to his predecessor's rescue and declared that it was the privilege of the president to be autocratic.

When, after the Gandhi-Irwin Truce, he came to Bombay, a disgruntled Congress Muslim volunteer rushed in front of Jawaharlal's car and would not budge. He offered Satyagraha so that he may force the Pandit to settle his grievances with the Bombay Provincial Congress authorities. "I won't stand your nonsense," indignantly remarked Jawaharlal, forcibly ejecting the volunteer, and moved his car on. "One cannot have non-violence for all time." The Volunteer must have been astounded, for he caught a Tartar in the Pandit, instead of a mild, yielding and pliant Congressman. How would the Mahatma have behaved under similar circumstances?

Jawaharlal can dominate a platform with as much ease and calm as he witnesses an air raid. He flew all over India in Hitler fashion, blossoming into the best election winner of the land. Congress Presidents once in a year smugly sat in chariots drawn by fifty horses; but Nehru defied the convention and rode a horse. As the President of his home Provincial Congress Committee, he conducted a workers' camp, led even aged, veteran workers like ex-Premier

Govind Vallabh Pant on long route marches, dressing them up in Khaki shorts and drilled them in the typical manner of a drill-sergeant.

The Pandit once took a Bombay audience to task for some persons moving to and fro during the meeting. According to him that behaviour was ungentlemanly and ill-fitted them as citizens. On another occasion he reproved a Delhi audience for unpunctuality and declared them unfit for Swaraj. The present writer recalls a public meeting he arranged to be addressed by the Pandit and another eminent national leader. The Pandit came in time, addressed the meeting and went off to keep the appointment at another meeting. A sarcastic smile flitted across his face when he knew that his colleague kept the audience blankly waiting for him for over an hour and admired the patience of the crowd that sat silent awaiting the speaker for such a length of time after he himself had finished his job and gone away. Nelson ascribed the foundation of his greatness to the fact that he was always quarter of an hour before his time!

The Pandit is a breaker of idols and burns no incense at any antiquated shrine. As one who smashed idols, he pays no homage and expects none for himself. He would literally kick anyone falling at his feet. It is common in India for people to fall down at the feet of a great man. The Indian crowds beseege him; some fall down and touch his feet. To them, sanctity is conveyed by this touch of a demi-god. But Jawaharlal would never stand this nonsense as some other contemporary leaders do. He would forcibly throw aside anyone who would manifest servile obeisance to him. He never believes in the past; he only looks ahead. He wants to discard the past and create everything anew.

Jawaharlal has frankly expressed his view on religion—

“About religion I am quite convinced that there must be the most perfect freedom of faiths and observance. People can worship God in any of the thousand ways they like. But I claim the freedom to draw people

away from what I consider superstition and unsocial practices."

He would eat no meat but does not mind killing! "I would even kill those animals myself," he summed up his attitude, "but I can't eat them." That is his explanation for his vegetarianism.

His *Autobiography* contains some moving chapters of his prison life where birds and beasts, snakes and insects enormously helped him to relieve the monotony and heaviness associated with gaols. As a keen observer of insect and animal life, the Pandit drew significant lessons out of national symbols:—

"Different countries have adopted different animals as symbols of their ambition or character—the eagle of the United States of America and of Germany, the lion and bulldog of England, the fighting cock of France, the bear of old Russia. How far do these patron animals mould national character? Most of them are aggressive, fighting animals, beasts of prey. It is not surprising that the people who grow up with these examples before them should mould themselves consciously after them and strike up aggressive attitudes, and roar and prey on others. Nor is it surprising that the Hindu should be mild and non-violent for his patron animal is the cow."

Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, "The Mahatma of Andhra-desha," gifted with a keen analytical mind, in his frank appreciation of Nehru, wrote :—

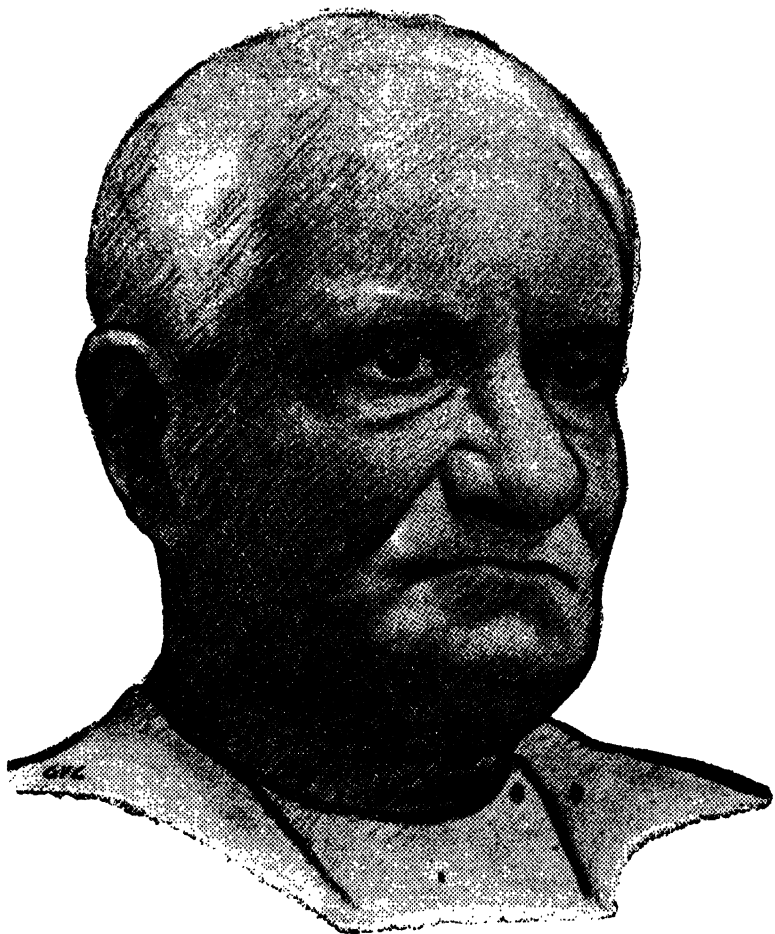
"But when all is said and done, the fact remains that Jawaharlal is a politician—not a saint or a philosopher, loves the good things of the world, but under no circumstances places pleasure before duty or self before country. He is thus inured to the severities of a hard life, can travel third class, sleep on the naked earth, walk up miles of distance and live on a poor fare. Gandhi and Jawaharlal are poles apart in structure, faith and philosophy. Yet they have worked together for twenty-one years, agreeing to differ, differing in their agreement—which has been made possible only by the sense of proportion, perspective and propriety observed by each in dealing with the other and both in dealing with the rest of the world."

As the pioneer standard-bearer of the Flag of Indian Independence, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has hewn out his place amongst the gigantic fighters of the nation. He started the prairie fire of Socialist thought in the Congress camp which may one day devour the country and easily make him the new Moses. His contribution to Indian politics is vast and indispensable. He is the knight-errant striding valiantly and defiantly against the mightiest forces banded together in history. He is the arch-priest of sedition and has sown his seeds far and wide. He is the idol of youth and commands their love and homage. He is the purest breath of fresh air sweeping our contaminated sphere. If he is an autocrat, he wants to exercise his autocracy entirely in favour of the unhappy millions. His heart is with the myriad hewers of wood and drawers of water, whose tragic fate he wants to revolutionize with one sweep of his hand. He ever dreams of days yet to come and definitely turns his back upon the past. He has burst the bubble of the fairy-land, so finely but sarcastically depicted in his chaste, inimitable style:—

“the fabled and far-famed land of Cockaigne, where every crow is a peacock and every goose a swan; where strong silent men, floating serenely and majestically in the upper regions, like imperial eagles, protected the land and only swooped down occasionally to rid it of human rats and other noxious animals; where every man in authority was a Solon, and every knighted fool a statesman; where, one could almost feel, but for the irritating antics of certain miserable, blind and ungrateful human beings, that all was for the best under this best of all possible Governments.”

He has himself replied upsetting the apple-cart:—  
*“The old order has gone and all the king’s horses and all the king’s men will not set it up again.”* Jawaharlal is the greatest danger to the might of the British Empire in the East. He is the proudest heritage bequeathed by his immortal sire to the nation. The rising sun is brighter than the sun that has set! Glory to them both!





**PANDIT MOTILAL NEHRU**



## PANDIT MOTILAL NEHRU

**"MY** father took eggs and meat; my grandfather regularly feasted on them; and my great-grandfather relished them much. For the last seven generations we had plenty of eggs and meat," retorted one of the giants, striding Indian politics like a colossus, when asked how he happened to gulp down such stuff. He had not finished with his opponent without the final deadly hit. "But so far as I know this new-born Pandit, whom you are here to support began taking them at the tables of Government House!" Chintamani ventured no more into the dietary arrangement of "Anand Bhuvan" and ceased to make capital out of it for his electioneering propaganda. But he never forgave the Pandit, who pursued him relentlessly to the end, and the famous Editor always referred him as "Mr. Nehru" in the columns of the *Leader*.

This smashing retort revealed the man, the patriot and the aristocrat, who constituted the second great link of the most formidable triumvirate of Indian politics. With his preceptor on one side and his colleague on the other, he formed the most powerful combination witnessed in Indian public life. Together they moved mountains and other men were content to move beneath them like insignificant mid-gets. Gandhi, Das and Nehru were the demigods, with the last of the Caesars now left behind. They suffered lesser mortals to be ruled by them and millions hungered to receive their commands. The fiery Bengali supplied the driving power and reckless sacrifice to the team; the Kashmir Pandit enriched it with his priceless culture, intellectual touch and inherent gift of leadership of men; and the cool, calculating Gujarati Bania endowed the triple alliance with his superb moral base. Chitta Ranjan Das and Motilal Nehru died in the splendour of their fame and when the



latter passed away the old sun of the Swarajist firmament was set. His name on every lip—the philosophy of resistance to foreign domination sought personification in him. The sun, setting from the battle-field did not fade away without another sun rising more resplendent and glittering than the former.

Born a moderate in politics, circumstances drove Pandit Motilal Nehru into the extremist fold. A believer in co-operation with Britain, his faith was shattered by the Punjab wrongs and therein lies epitomised the tragedy of the British rule in India. Edwin Samuel Montague recognized a possible friend in him when he jotted down in his *Indian Diary* that he had been “a great fire-brand . . . . .but even he seemed to be quite willing. . . .if only he was satisfied that we meant business and they could get responsible government in, say, twenty years.” That was written nearly thirty years ago; but that “business” of self-government is still at a stand-still! Though spurred on into the fighting front, his attitude was always characterised by a conservative restraint and an assurance of stability that went hand-in-hand with all his doings. Not an irresponsible hot-head, but an eminently practical statesman, he thoroughly understood every move in the game. He held in his hands the web of a myriad negotiations, but was ever ready to snap the line and jump into the fray. The magnitude of his sacrifice thrust him into the vanguard of leadership. When once the call came he threw away

“ . . . the dearest thing he own'ed  
 'twere a careless trifle.”

Gone were the days when the finest Egyptian cigarettes adorned Pandit Motilal's smoking-tables! Gone were the days, when the choicest liquors were offered to his guests, of every race and creed! Gone were the days when the gastronomical tastes of the visitors, comprising of nabobs and governors, princes and politicians, were catered for in every fashion! Gone were the days when briefs accom-

panied with most tempting fees ever paid to any advocate in India, came trooping into his chambers! Gone were the days when a dark grey morning coat with striped trousers and patent leather boots and all the meticulous care spent on sartorial perfection were his stock-in-trade for innumerable public functions! Pandit Motilal Nehru gave up his practice at the Bar in obedience to the triple boycott, spurned all luxuries and clothed the members of his family with coarse, hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar—the emblem of his Master whom he had sworn to serve faithfully unto his mortal end. Once the glass of fashion and pattern of etiquette, he became the humble soldier of Swaraj and transformed overnight from an *amir* into a *fakir*! The generosity and sacrifice offered by “Anand Bhuvan” constituted a by-word in our national life. General Dyer’s “magnificent doings” in the Punjab, wrought the miracle in the life of this Prince of Patriots. From now on, .

His bounty,  
There was no winter in’t an autumn ’twas,  
That grew the more by reaping.

Magnanimity and valour were finely allied in him. The old warrior towards the end, wrestled with his malady with a patience and determination, of which heroes are made. Pale and shrunken in body, the terrors of prison-life held him not from the danger-zone. His eagle-eye flashed the glint of battle. “I have been a fighter all my life,” he exclaimed from his death-bed; “and I mean to fight this illness till the end.” The life of the dungeon cruelly cut short the span. His last resolve was to refuse to pay his stupendous income-tax and thus give the lead for the No-Tax campaign. He foresaw the logical end of his contemplated steps—the locking and sealing up of his historic mansion and his going into poor quarters. Motilal’s fighting fervour in advancing age and his courting imprisonment shamed the bureaucrats into ordering his belated release which did not however save his life. This recalls the touch-

ing episodes of the venerable Camillus, elected five times the Dictator of Rome. The Gauls sacked and destroyed Rome; the noble Saviour of the "Eternal City," now quite old, lacking little of eighty years, but recognizing the peril and the necessity which it laid upon him, neither made excuse, nor resorted to pretext, but instantly took upon himself the command and went to levying his soldiers.

Pandit Motilal's most inspiring oration in the Legislative Assembly, where he moved like a giant, commanding homage from friend and foe alike, is an immortal avowal of his great faith and strength. A British journal wickedly hinted that if British troops were withdrawn, "the Nehrus would disappear into impotent obscurity." The jibe brought forth the most dignified, impassioned through stinging retort:—

"As to myself and other members of my party sinking into obscurity—well, that is a matter, that is a thing—which we shall never regret. In fact, that is a fate which we covet. Our highest ambition is to be buried underneath the foundation of a free India and then to sink into obscurity to be thought of no more. Who can thwart that ambition? Can the mechanised forces of the Empire thwart it? The ambition to work for the Independence of one's country and to die for it cannot be thwarted by any human agency. We shall work on the foundation until we drop down dead and be buried underneath. I assure you that we shall drop down dead in the supreme satisfaction that the whole edifice of the freedom of India shall in the fulness of time rise on our bones."

Pandit Motilal laid down the code for the journalist and the law for the purest nationalist in his classic contribution in the first number of his paper, *The Independent*, started in 1919 at Allahabad:—

"*The Independent* has come into existence to lay bare the soul of a nation, of a people ripening into a nationhood, of communities merging into a people, of individuals growing into a community. How shall it approach its noble work or better still, how not? Not along the facile line of opportunism, the fatal line of least resistance

## PANDIT MOTILAL NEHRU

which stifles the soul and perverts the mind. Not by the methods of cabal, camera and camarilla, which bring no lasting good, and only distort the outlook. But by bringing the fierce light of day to play on dark spots wherever they exist. By giving expression to the plain expressions of the plain mind in plain language. By striving to press home the eternal truth that while on the one hand, natural rights of mankind cannot be withheld to be doled out in little bits in the consciousness of high-minded generosity and a benign benevolent purpose, those rights cannot, on the other hand, thrive in an atmosphere of religious cleavage and religious antagonism. Thus alone can *The Independent* fulfil its mission."

Stern and uncompromising to the weakening of any programme once agreed upon, Pandit Motilal stood like a rock against any possible breach. A deputation of Bombay merchants, who burnt their fingers by the importation of large stocks of foreign cloth waited on him in 1930 to get his sanction for the disposal of their goods already stocked. The value of the stock ran into crores of rupees; but Pandit Motilal budged not an inch. From his ailing bed, he threatened penalties to anyone countenancing such a move. The Congress Dictator would not give any quarter to dealers in foreign cloth. He would stand no monkeying with the principles which served as the ground-work of the fighting line. The commercial classes thoroughly identified themselves with the national struggle; and thousands of rupees flowed into the Congress coffers; but that did not mean that they could dictate the policy. The Pandit was adamant in his refusal and the stocks were left to rot. Had not thousands, he argued, from the rank and file poured out their invaluable sacrifice of life, suffering and strength to hold the standard aloft? The Swaraj Party made treaties with industrial magnates but the latter dreaded the presence of the Pandit, who neither mildly acquiesced in their behests nor used the funds generously placed by them at the party's disposal for his personal aggrandisement. Like Cimon, the foremost Hellenic statesman, Motilal earned

money that "he might spend it; and spent it that he might be honoured for it.....he remained unbought and unapproached by bribes, devoting all his powers to the state without recompense and in all purity through to the end."

The Pandit had no rival for the unique combination of idealism and practical statesmanship. His mind would soar into heights of idealism without losing touch with the practical domain. He plunged into Non-Co-operation; but when he surveyed the field and found that reactionaries and toadies took possession of it, he raised the banner of revolt against the Non-Changers and fought his way into the legislatures with his hosts of adherents, spread over every legislature. Again, when he realised that a real fight would be perilously postponed by sticking to the "dummy councils"—"the temples of *maya*," he burned his boats and ordered the withdrawal of his forces from that front. It was his brilliant brain that first conceived the idea of a Round Table Conference—but not the wretched table—the bellowing and scheming table that was finally devised by our overlords. The late Lord Birkenhead's insolent challenge to produce a constitution brought forth the Nehru Report, the first great effort at constitution-making by Indians. Pandit Motilal did not give the mob, what was meant for Parliament. He only gave the nation what was never meant for the hybrid of a legislature. The practical and the ideal in him combined when he declared in his Calcutta Congress presidential address:—

"I stand for Complete Independence, as complete as it can be—but I am not against full Dominion Status, as full as any Dominion possesses to-day, provided I get it before it loses its attraction."

When the *tete-a-tete* of the "Big Five" with Lord Irwin, arranged by the late Vithalbhai Patel on the eve of the Lahore Congress failed to produce any satisfactory result, Pandit Motilal marched off from Delhi to the banks of Ravi and there burned his Report. Ready to fire the last shot, he

## PANDIT MOTILAL NEHRU

reached the boundry and found no hesitation to plunge into the fray. No one likes to destroy what he has created, much less written and set his seal upon. We are enamoured of our writing. But when the national interests demanded that the Nehru Report should not hold sway, Pandit Motilal was the first to tear it into shreds. Destruction is a hard, painful thing to follow creation or construction; to Motilal the last step presented no difficulties. At Ravi, he crossed his Rubicon and declared firmly:—"Let the die be cast." He went straight for the mark. From now on, it would be one long march to the goal. He fulfilled Carlyle's advice:—

Choose well, your choice is  
Brief yet endless.

Pandit Motilal drew a moral out of the very lines he quoted when he made his speech during the first Swarajist "exodus" from the Assembly:—

He either fears his fate too much,  
Or his deserts are small,  
That dares not put it to the touch,  
To gain or lose it all.

During a period stretching over a decade, when he played his important role as one of the greatest leaders of our movement for National liberation, there was not a single decision of outstanding importance that did not bear the impress of his genius. In delicate negotiations, he had no rival in the whole of India. He was the master of essentials, uprooting all inessentials. "Anand Bhuvan" in his time became the House of the nation, witnessing every important activity. The nation never possessed a leader so tactful as Pandit Motilal in stating its case, so resolute in purpose and so dexterous in crossing swords with the most accomplished opponents. He used words the meaning of which he scanned through and through. Having borne the brunt of long and difficult negotiations—the extremists behind him chafed at his moderation and the moderates flared up at his extremism. But Motilal seized the golden mean. The final act

in the first round of the fight closed without the star-actor living to play his part. Death showed no mercy and spared him not even a few weeks for the indispensable contribution to the closing scene of the first bright chapter of the struggle, planned and directed by him in all its details. It was a tragedy that the warrior was laid to his final rest before the truce was signed and the movement was called off. The Gandhi-Irwin Truce lacked the *Motilal* touch. Had he lived he would have spared us that silent wailing and gnashing of teeth in the camp—that unwholesome negotiation that ultimately let the Congress down. The General was deprived of his right-hand-man and felt handicapped. The hand that drafted every single resolution and manifesto of importance for over a decade was not there to add the final touch to the agreement that sheathed the sword and called out for truce! It was left to his world-celebrated son to do it all over again when he assumed command.

Pandit Motilal's services to the Swaraj Party are a record of finest achievements. He lavished his intellectual gifts in the service of the Party and made it the most compact, disciplined and formidable political group known till then in Indian politics. The party under his leadership swept out the moderates and other opponents from the Council and the Assembly like leaves in an autumn gale. The place, crowded with reactionaries and communalists, came to be hallowed with the presence of the Swarajists. When they departed to wage the battle from outside, the legislatures resumed their former colour of political mendicancy and humiliation. The Swarajists exposed the machinations and irresponsible acts of the bureaucracy. They preached and strove to the utmost to practise the doctrine of continuous, uniform and persistent obstruction. They imported the tactics of Parnell in the Indian legislatures and focussed public attention on their doings. However, they failed to wreck Government from *within*, though they made sorry work of so many bureaucratic schemes.

When Motilal found that genuine work was imperilled, he withdrew his followers from the Assembly and initiated the militant campaign. What he was able to achieve in one year of defiance outside the Assembly, he did not secure by the organised and sympathetic obstruction within the legislatures. The Swarajist sojourn in the Assembly proved a case of brilliant futility.

As the distinguished leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, Pandit Motilal presented the finest figure of a Parliamentarian. With nothing to add to his stock of legal forms and parliamentary conventions, he remains for all time in India a model parliamentary leader. The procedure of the House was at the tip of his fingers. For six years, he dominated the House and none bossed over it like him. Amidst the clash of intellect, he rose supreme, commanding all-round attention. When the Pandit cared no more to sit in his place, others coveted and scrambled for it; forgetting that once he had spurned it, all its charm had gone. They had none of his gifts, neither his brilliance nor his astuteness. At the opportune moment, the Pandit swooped down on his opponent with lightning rapidity and manoeuvred himself into an impregnable position, without allowing the adversary to catch him napping. He demonstrated before the House what party politics meant and offered a thorough-going machine as a model for others to work upon. Lala Lajpat Rai was famed as the best Assembly orator, Jayakar the finest speaker, Malaviya the most eloquent speaker, Jinnah the best debator and Vithalbhai the champion schemer—but none of them could touch Motilal Nehru as a Parliamentarian, though he was neither an orator nor a debator. His speeches read so well in cold print, though unattractive to the ear.

Gossip had it in the lobby of the Assembly that the discipline of the "mighty Pandit" smacked of "nawabism" and "tyranny" but he went his own way unmindful of criticism. He ruled the party with an iron hand which



exasperated some and drove them out of the fold—"Party-saving" flashed out Wang Ching-Wei, the successor of Sun-Yat-Sen, in the leadership of the Kuo-Min-Tang, throwing his thunderbolts in the camp of traitors, "is as important as party purging." Pandit Motilal was equally ruthless in the business of "party-purging." "The diseased limbs of the Swaraj party must be torn off," was the anathema he pronounced on the Responsivists who rebelled against his "dictatorship."

As a party manager, he possessed the gift of knowing men and making the utmost use of them. He picked out the best men for the jobs but went his own way of making their selection for posts. He would summon a party meeting to choose candidates for election to the various committees of the House and say:—"Gentlemen, I have nominated Mr. Rangaswami Aiyangar and Mr. Shanmukham Chetty to go on this Committee as the representatives of our party and now *you choose the rest.*" The voice of contention stilled before the assertive tone of the leader. His supremacy amongst his colleagues and followers was acknowledged on all hands. He could not be ruled out, once he made up his mind. Everyone's claim was admitted but Motilal's opinion reigned over all other opinions and claims. The colleagues of Abraham Lincoln discovered when they were faced with a crisis in the Union that in the cabinet, "there is but one vote, and that is cast by the President!"

The Pandit could not stand criticism, direct or indirect; his only beloved son has inherited these tendencies. To hold in leash the dogs of fury from an offender was incompatible with his high-strung nature. "I don't care," he thundered at a Bombay meeting of the All-India Congress Committee, "what motives are ascribed to me. The gentlemen are welcome to fret and fume. I can't be touched. I shall yield to none, not even to Pandit Jawaharlal." His attitude proved that aristocratic natures are seldom in accord with the multitude and do precious little to please it. On the other hand

## PANDIT MOTILAL NEHRU

they vex and annoy it. His commanding position in the public life of the country roused envy and hostility. The succession of Motilal to the mighty seat occupied by the great Deshbandhu Das caused heart-burning and the Responsivist insurrection flared up. Jayakar, Moonje and Kelkar felt that they could not play second-fiddle to Motilal. Pandit Motilal Nehru would never brook another Caesar in the camp. The Maharashtra trio clean forgot that:—

For all who run the race,  
Cannot together win the pace.

“The Nehru dynasty must be ended,” was the bitter comment heard by the present writer from the mouth of an ex-President of the Congress, who alas is no more! He is known but cannot be named. He, however, forgot that the man who made the greater sacrifices was entitled to hold the field. Ignoring insults and forgiving those who questioned his authority were not the Pandit's traits. A democrat surfeited with aristocratic leanings his wrath came down on those who dared dissent from him.

Much of the communal conflict could have been prevented had Motilal been a little more accommodating. The ranks of discontent swelled. “My brother was hounded out of the Working Committee,” pathetically declared Maulana Shaukat Ali, at the Percival Committee instituted by the Government of Bombay to enquire into the riots of February, 1929. Therein is one clue to the communal warfare. The Nehru Report gave a worse turn. Had Pandit Motilal got the better of his temper and avoided wounding Mahomed Ali's “ego” and then later on meted out some deferential treatment to the “Big Brother” at Allahabad where a Conference sat to consider the Nehru Report, the course of national affairs might have had a different turn. However, those who foisted the communal complex on the Pandit wronged him; thereby they were out to wipe off his sturdy nationalism and reckless sacrifices for the cause of his people.

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

Woodrow Wilson likewise erred in his tactics. Just before the Armistice he blundered by appealing to the electorate to return only the Democratic senators and Congressmen when the Republicans had already joined hands with his adherents to greet him with national applause. The second blunder that directly paved the way for his downfall was his fatal failure to nominate any Republican from amidst the fold of such veterans like Taft or Root to the Peace Commission. Wilson had with one stroke slapped both the Senate and the Republican Party! Neither Senator nor Republican pleased him enough to be appointed on the Peace Commission, Wilson had been acclaimed by the world as a hero but scarcely a year had passed when he lay "at the foot of his pedestal." He had "slipped into the one deadly blunder that all leaders try to avoid; he had wounded the other fellow's vanity."

The Pandit was neither a bigot in politics nor in religion. He possessed liberal convictions and was ever open to rational adaptation. As an ardent social reformer, he practised what he preached. He was the first of the Kashmir Pandits to smash the *purdah* in his family. The charming and gifted daughters of the Pandit, who in elegance and culture can hold their own against any of their western sisters, reflect credit on their patrician father, who was a champion of equal rights for women. When the Sarda Bill was on the anvil of the Assembly, the Pandit rose and said that he had thrown all the opinions he had received for and against the bill, into the wastepaper-basket, for he relied on the observations of a life-time. He went on to say that if the Hindu *Shastras* had any injunction in this matter, then he had no use for the *Shastras*. Once Lala Lajpat Rai whipped up the forces of fanaticism against the Pandit's progressive views on religion during the Swarajist electioneering campaign and asked "whether the Pandit believed in the Vedas?" "I believe in the principles underlying the Vedas"—in that pithy sentence the Pandit

silenced the "Lion of the Punjab." On another occasion, an over-zealous Maulana anxious to enlist the support of the Pandit against the Hindu detractors of the Prophet requested him to speak out his mind on their activities. The Pandit calmly replied:—"The Prophet, if he is a prophet does not stand in need of our aid, yours or mine!"

Clad in a loose-fitting tunic with an elegant silk-khaddar coat, sturdily built for his years and endowed with a massive head, with fine silvery hair, topping his handsome face, Pandit Motilal had the appearance of a Prince of the Roman Church. He carried his seventy summers lightly with the spirit of youth. "If Pandit Jawaharlal is the eldest young man," cried out the late Mahomed Ali in a fit of rapture, "Pandit Motilal is the youngest old man in India." My Nasik Jail friend, the dynamic and patriotic Dr. A. G. Tendulkar (now rotting as a Detenue in the Yeravda Central Prison), who made the battles of his Motherland well known on the Continent of Europe through his vigorous French and German writings, and who was his guest at "Anand Bhuvan" in 1930 whilst representing *Berliner Tageblatts* as its correspondent wrote to his Berlin paper:—

"When Pandit Motilal lays aside his gold spectacles and takes off his white khaddar head dress, he closely resembles an ancient Roman. He wears his robe of hand-woven Indian wool as if it were a toga, and when he raises his finely-modelled right hand, one feels that he could teach Mussolini the proper way to make a Roman salute!"

Who amongst us doth now possess the prepossessing personality of that great patriot? On the Central Congress platform, his son commands the admiration of Asiatic or non-Asiatic, coloured or white, for his captivating features. Otherwise Motilal's like is not to be seen on the Congress platform; there is no image like his in the galaxy of our living heroes except that of his son. But even the son pales into insignificance before the classic giant of his dead father!

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

Legends were woven around the Pandit's remarkable personality. There is one which runs that when the Pandit decided to remove his whiskers, the artistic circles considered that his most charming characteristic had vanished. The Pandit did not disappoint the ladies when they came in deputation to him. He rose to the occasion and replied that "the matter would be carefully considered." Within a fortnight the ladies unanimously opined that the Pandit without his whiskers was as attractive as with them. His tastes were wide and catholic. He amassed both wisdom and learning. Like a born-master he dived in the realm of Persian literature, grammar and philosophy. He explored and ransacked this literature for apt quotations, which he used with telling effect.

Pandit Nehru was feared by some, loved by many and respected by all. Humility was unknown to him for he seemed to be conscious of the gulf that divided him from the lesser men. He failed to graduate from the University but was recompensed by topping the Allahabad High Court Law examination and rose to be one of the greatest lawyers of Hindustan. He did not suffer fools gladly and loved to indulge in a bit of scorn for other men. His philosophy was the philosophy of Disraeli. "To govern men" said the great Israelite, "you must either be superior to them or despise them." Pandit Motilal was the type of gentleman who looked "the whole world in the face, for he owed not any man" and his word was his bond. The late Sir Harcourt Butler, the ex-Governor of Burma and the United Provinces (the uncle of Robert Butler of the British Cabinet) in his book, *Insistent India*, claims him as one of his best friends and goes on to say:—

"He broke the law and I ordered his prosecution; but even then there was no malice, for he sent me a message that had I known my law better I could have got him 18 months instead of six! He was a great gentleman and a loyal friend whom I shall always bear in affectionate remembrance while lamenting his political apostasy."

Some dazzling feature in the Pandit's life even cured men of their ills. Sir Sachidananda Sinha, the ex-Finance Member of Bihar has related a touching episode in his early life, over forty years ago, when malaria ravaged his youth. Hope of cure leapt out of his life when his physician desperately told him:—"I am going to prescribe for you the best tonic I have in my repertory and if that fails I can do nothing for you; as it never failed so far." The tonic was an introduction to Pandit Motilal. Sinha thus reported his first impression: "At the end of half an hour I felt as if I had known him all my life and my illness slowly vanished under the influence of Motilal's sunny nature."

Pandit Motilal is the last of our giants who loved, laboured and lived for the freedom of his people. Twice the "Helmsman" of the Congress, he was called upon to guide our destinies at momentous periods. The voice is hushed that called to war. The arm lies still that hurled defiance; and the eye is for ever closed that emitted sparks of battle unto the end. No wonder that Mahatma Gandhi felt "like a widow," when he passed away, and mourned the loss of an invaluable colleague. The illustrious head of the Nehru dynasty might be cut off but the light radiating from "Anand Bhuvan" will continue to shed its lustre for all time. When the sire, intensely proud of his darling boy handed over to him the reins of office at the Lahore Congress, quoting a Persian proverb he hoped that "what the father left incomplete and undone, the son would accomplish."





**SIRDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL**





## SIRDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

**"A** religious war unprecedented in the history of the world will start within a few days and its beginnings be made in Gujarat. Those who are afraid of death should go on a pilgrimage and those who possess wealth, should go to foreign countries. Those who are true Gujaratis should not sit behind closed doors."

thundred Vallabhbhai Patel, before the Dandi March commenced in 1930 and Mahatma Gandhi initiated the greatest effort for national freedom since the fatal days of the Indian Mutiny. Over a thousand and two hundred American papers flashed the warning. The Sirdar spoke like Cato who as though inspired and possessed with prophetic power foretold in the Roman Senate what disaster would befall to the city. The Sirdar delivered the warning to the unbelievers and pronounced the order of extermination on all shirkers and betrayers. He would either have them with him or out of the country. They had to be somewhere in the line or be farthest from it.

"Out of my country and myself I go."

The truth of the warning was realised in the intense struggle that ended in the Gandhi-Irwin Truce, and revived in 1932 with more ferocity and vigour. Before Mahatma Gandhi launched his "Open Rebellion" movement in 1942, his premier disciple again declared from Gujarat that all should strive their utmost for the impending struggle; it would be a short and swift one or we would be vanquished. Before the sound of those who scoffed had died down, the country was engulfed from one end to the other and the greatest conflict of the century was begun against the rulers. When the trumpet-voice of Gandhi first sounded the call for the Dandi March and a decade later of the "Open Rebellion" campaign, the Sirdar offered the first sacrifice. He hesitated not to fling everything for liberty

along with his master, whose name will for ever ring down the corridors of time. The ringing messages preceding the terrific struggle could be delivered only by one who resolutely and faithfully served the master from the time he threw away his briefs and earthly ties. The General and his trusted lieutenant were to play the dominant roles in thrusting their beloved Gujarat in the vanguard of the hitherto greatest struggles for national freedom.

This agrarian rebel was the first of his kind to ascend the Congress *gadi* and learnt to command men's obedience implicitly for the causes he espoused. Under his leadership, the peasants of Gujarat braved the worst perils. Gandhi left it to his chief lieutenant to work up the peasantry and the chief relied on his dozen strong adherents, noted for silent, unostentatious and substantial work. The groundwork accomplished, the magazine was ready for explosion. The peasants refused to pay their revenues; their lands were confiscated. They crowned their acts of disloyalty by burning their crops, to leave desolation behind them. They were past masters of the "Scorched Earth" policy. The savage marks remained indelible; how could they be effaced? They staked their all on the Mahatma's programme, guaranteed to them by their Sirdar. They even packed off on their *hizrat*. Machiavelli truly advised that the property of subjects should be severely left alone, "for a man will sooner forgive the slaying of his father than the confiscation of his patrimony." The Sirdar who could live without any patrimony, educated and drilled his followers into such a state that they could well afford to make the sacrifice of their own inherited properties, passed from sire to son. But they never forgot that they were forced to yield. Therein lay the basic menace to British rule in Gujarat or in any part of the country wherein the fight was waged on similar lines.

The Sirdar spread widely the gospel of his master amongst the peasantry of Gujarat. The victory of Bardoli

is still resounding in our ears. The magnificent stand of the peasantry during the 1930 and 1932 campaigns constituted the backbone of the resistance to British rule in Western India and word had to go forth to the peasants from their beloved leader that they could go and occupy their lands. Without his command, instructed by Gandhiji, the farmers would not come out from their retirement. True to his plighted troth, the Sirdar saw to it that the Bombay Congress Ministry specially passed a bill to buy out the buyers and restore the lands to the old peasantry. All this work was not accomplished in a single day. There were many warriors before Agamemnon; but none had attained his height. It was left to Vallabhbhai to lift the *Land Revenue Code* from the plane of wordy warfare and ponderous resolutions into stark action and open struggle. Others had spoken and written volumes on the woes of peasantry; but he was the first successful agrarian rebel, who organised and shaped the discontent of the mass of peasantry into open mass action. The Bardoli chapter was the highlight of his public career and Bardoli instantly put him on the map of national leadership. Until Bardoli, Vallabhbhai was only a leader with provincial reputation; from that time onwards he was invested with all-India fame. He kindled the Bardoli flame to ultimately *Bardolise* the country.

Who was this agrarian rebel who so changed the face of things on that vast countryside for his master? What kind of change did his master work in the life of his own pupil? We have his own confession to bear testimony to the amazing transformation of his career.

"I was a dandy and wasted all my time out of court in playing bridge. I was sick of the politics of the day which to me were a by-word of poltroonery and hypocrisy until Gandhi opened my eyes and showed me the way. His earnestness and gravity captured me and I became his slave!"

This is the true history of his conversion to the Gandhi idea. From that time on, he was powerfully drawn by the magic spell of Mahatma Gandhi. Vallabhbhai fully imbibed the spirit of his master and lived the life of extreme simplicity. He once declared that he could live for three months on mere air! After he became the Mahatma's principal follower, he was ever ready to pay the extremest penalties for his convictions.

A pair of Patel brothers have wrought havoc on British prestige in India. One showed the world that Indians were capable of holding the highest position of dignity, respect and influence under the Crown; whilst the other manifested the successful spirit of defiance, armed with non-violence, against the most powerful government machinery in history. You will not find another such pair in all history except in ancient Rome. Tiberius and Caius Gracchus championed the cause of the discontented and lost their lives; the Patel brothers would have served excellent material to Pluarch for his *Lives*, had they lived in ancient Rome. Like the famed pair of Gracchis, who died fighting for the rights of the Roman populace, the Patel brothers have scorned wealth and proved themselves "superior to money...in the fact that they kept themselves clean from the unrighteous gains during their official and public life." These distinguished Gujarati brothers hailed from the hardy stock of ryots and were doughty champions of the soil. They were rural heroes who went out to dominate the urban area. Both were specialists in local self-government, having most efficiently run two foremost Municipalities of this land, Bombay and Ahmedabad, but they finally made their choice and staked all for a National Government. One was the stormy petrel of politics whilst the other was our best known agrarian heretic. One was lured away by the platform; whilst the other abhorred publicity. Both are renowned figures of the modern Indian revolution; but they sought to work in

opposing fields, the elder wrecking the governmental machinery from within, whilst the surviving young brother surveyed it from afar and never entered within, content with having dealt it a death blow on the outbreak of the War in 1939. Both were the disciples of Gandhi, but the elder one remained to scoff whilst the younger brother always remained to pray. Vithalbhai blazed fire; Vallabhbhai showed thoroughness. One was the tactician and the juggler; the other a born strategist and master of details. Vithalbhai fired the intellect; Vallabhbhai conquered the heart. One roused the sentiment of the masses; whilst the other remained to organise and lead them unto victory. Vithalbhai was frank but his brother's silence was baffling. The Congress executive had no room for both; and hence Vithalbhai ate his heart out in the wilderness of the legislature, though he was allowed to boss the show there. The Sirdar remained where he was and became the master of the situation; patience rewarded his efforts. Vithalbhai having become impatient, went out to seek a kingdom for himself in the field of legislatures and before long came out disillusioned. Vithalbhai as the great Speaker of the Indian Legislative Assembly threatened the Commander-in-Chief of India and forced him to tender an apology with the result that the future Commanders-in-Chief never dared to enter that House again. But Vallabhbhai kept the Governors of seven Provinces at one stroke waiting on his dreaded decisions. The process that Vithalbhai initiated on the tip of De Valera that Parnell's tactics should be imported in the Indian Legislatures, Vallabhbhai completed. Such is the story of the lives of these two greatest patriots of Gujarat, barring the Mahatma and Bhulabhai Desai. Vithalbhai casting his eye on the foreign fields of propaganda, wanting to enlist friendly opinion in favour of his country, veritably lost his life; but Vallabhbhai never stirred out of his beloved Gujarat and only went to Bombay to wrest attention.

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

Vallabhbhai went about his business building the strongest organisation in Gujarat. You have to be either with him or against him. Hence the fate of dissentients who lost the battle and were thrust in isolation. Gujarat possesses the finest band of workers under the Sirdar; Morarji Desai, on whom perhaps the mantle of the Sirdar will fall one day, Dr. Chandulal Desai, who sacrificed a lucrative professional career for the hardships of leading the poor peasantry, Dr. Sumant Mehta, the ex-physician of the late Gaekwar of Baroda, Darbar Gopaldas Saheb, who spurned his principality for his burning patriotism and still remains a prince to the tip of his fingers, Dr. Hari-prasad Desai both a poet and patriot, Koreshi, an ardent Muslim Congressite, Dinker Desai, the leading Broach lawyer, Morarbhaj Patel, who displays the real spirit of Bardoli, Kanayalal Desai from Surat, who has placed his entire family at the disposal of the Motherland, Mavlankar, the Speaker of the Bombay Legislative Assembly, Dr. Champaklal Ghia who threw away the rosy chances of a career in the medical service and repeatedly courted imprisonment, Hariprasad Mehta, the old Ahmedabad M.L.A. Chotubhai Puranik, another tried worker and the youngest of the lot, Sarabhai Chotalal Parikh from Ahmedabad. Maniben, the Sirdar's only daughter and his valued Secretary, Bhaktiben, wife of Darbarsaheb, Mridula Ambalal Sarabhai and Mrs. Kanuga, were the women workers of this excellent team who have made Gujarat an impregnable fortress of Congress influence in the country.

The Sirdar's loyalty to the Mahatma is unquestioned. Though rumour had it that he was to be the successor to the Mahatma, the Mahatma's own word set the question at rest once and for all. The Mahatma's open declaration that Jawaharlal would lead the nation after he was gone, brought forth the finest sense of loyalty from the Sirdar himself. He who sat at the feet of the Mahatma, through good and evil report, was associated by the public with the

Mahatma's succession. But his sense of loyalty to Gandhi was so great that he would throw in his weight with the darling of the Congress, and heir-apparent of the Mahatma; Jawaharlal himself would never decide anything of importance without the Sirdar's weighty word in it; and even for the future long after Gandhiji retires or goes off the scene, the members of this powerful triumvirate would have to work in closest co-operation. Therein would be the strength of the Congress. Jawaharlal would bring to bear his richest idealism and the Sirdar his sledge-hammer on the job. Together they would hunt for the prey and seek pastures new in the verdant field of Indian nationalism. The Sirdar is the spear-head of the Right of the Congress and Jawaharlal the finest embodiment of the idealism, patriotism and discontent of the Left. The Mahatma has been the bridge between the two opposities; otherwise there would have been no peace in the fold. The Mahatma will see to it that the two will never strike against each other after he is gone off the stage and he can completely depend upon the Sirdar's loyalty to carry out the spirit of his master's instructions. No doubt Maulana Mahomed Ali is stated to have warned Jawaharlal that he should be beware of his own head at the hand of the Rights and Vallabhbhai's sternness and ruthlessness will help him to make the hardest task an easy one. The Sirdar has never concealed his hostility towards the Socialists. "Meherallys and Masanis would be Bhulabhais if they can; if they failed they would want to smash what they can't attain overnight," was once his typical comment to some of us. No doubt Vallabhbhai hates the excesses of capitalism like a Socialist and detests the outpourings of Socialists like a capitalist. But he would put up with Socialism if it accepted his dictatorship. Jawaharlal softened his opposition to the Parliamentary programme and idea of acceptance of offices only after he assured himself that Vallabhbhai would himself run the Parliamentary Committee,



vested with supreme powers. Bhulabhai Desai, Doctors Ansari and B. C. Roy had set the ball rolling and accomplished the spade work when the mind of the Congress itself was confused by conflicting ideologies.

Running the Congress Parliamentary machine, made the Sirdar the most maligned personality in Congress politics. To select candidates for the Provincial Assembly Elections and then to pick out Ministers and to reject others in seven out of the eleven provinces in Hindustan and keep the whole show going splendidly for well over two years, was no mean feat. Inexperienced in parliamentary ways, Vallabhbhai displayed uncommon extra-parliamentary zeal, which kept the machine running though it also earned him many bitter enemies. He was a law unto himself and even the ruling Congress President of the year dreaded to interfere with his commands. He did not worry if he was dubbed a Super-Hitler but what he felt to be a hit below the belt was that he was accused of attempting to supplant the Mahatma. In his loyalty to the Mahatma, nothing ever mattered to him. He ran the gauntlet in incurring the bitterest hostility of the great Subhas Chandra Bose, for whom he never showed any affection. Vallabhbhai fired a Premier and prevented another from becoming one! He awaited coolly after skilfully holding all the threads in his hand and then quietly proceeded to dispose of Nariman. Kher was elected the leader and eventually became the Prime Minister of Bombay. At the outset, Vallabhbhai showed his disinterestedness by frankly renouncing and rejecting all proposals for his being made the leader of the party. Nariman's affair could have been handled more tactfully. He could have been assigned to an equally noteworthy sinecure though no doubt it would have been a difficult task to divert Nariman's attention from the Premiership, once he had set his heart on it. He would not have been content with anything less. The Sirdar proved to be the only man who could stand up to the raging

and tearing campaign launched by Horniman in the Nariman episode. Unperturbed, not a hair of his head was stirred and eventually the whole agitation was killed not so much by the dwindling strength of Nariman's case as by the excellence of the Sirdar's choice of Kher. Kher least expected the job and it went almost abegging to him. By the strength of his own virtues, Kher attained instant popularity and proved the wisdom of the Sirdar's choice. By a strange irony of fate, Nariman was the first to hail Vallabhbhai as the "Sirdar of Bardoli" when he led us, Bombay Youth Leaguers, and organised demonstrations and collected funds for the Bardoli No-Tax campaign.

It was said that Dr. Khare was almost butchered by the Sirdar. That was false and untrue. Khare was clean bowled out before he took the bat and got time to lead the opposition. Hence the Ministries acted in unison and everyone resigned when the order went forth. Otherwise trouble would have been created by people who desired to remain behind and run the provincial administrations. The praise or the blame attached to the Congress High Command is neither sought for nor shirked by the Sirdar. All the sins of the Congress High Command were fastened on his head and if ever there was a Court of Impeachment, many and wild would be the charges that would be preferred against him. By hanging Khare and knocking down Nariman, though a little distressingly, the Sirdar did not so much correct his victims as send forth warnings to others.

The varied incidents in his career reveal the man and the patriot. First to be picked up for being jailed on the eve of every impending struggle, the Sirdar has firmly held that leaders should always remain in the front-line to inspire the crowd both in word and deed. When his great brother died and his remains brought to Bombay to be accorded an unprecedented funeral, the Sirdar bluntly refused to accept Government's offer to be released for a day. "I pray for the freedom of my country," were the last

words of the dying man and his brother spurned the Government's offer with the remark:—"I refuse to purchase freedom like that even if it be to see my beloved brother's face for the last time!" Stern and pitiless words these! His exhortation to his friends is "Do not believe anyone who states that jail life conduces to misery; on the other hand, you can be quite happy there on four pice a day." Fearless of death, he emphatically states that "death visits us but once; why die so many times out of fright as it makes no distinction between the millionaire and the peasant." When the bureaucracy ran amuck with their repression in the last campaigns of 1930 and 1932, he thus consoled his companions :—"Government has taxed our water in wells and lakes. Only the air remains to be taxed." If they taxed their air, his advice to them was to close their noses!

He is famed for his sarcasm and biting humour, doses of which he freely distributes to the bureaucracy. At the last meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held in Bombay in August, 1942 his was the liveliest speech, with lightning flashes of humour and sarcasm.

"They all tell us that there are so many puppet governments set up by Hitler all over the conquered countries. What kind of Government other than a puppet government is ruling us now?"

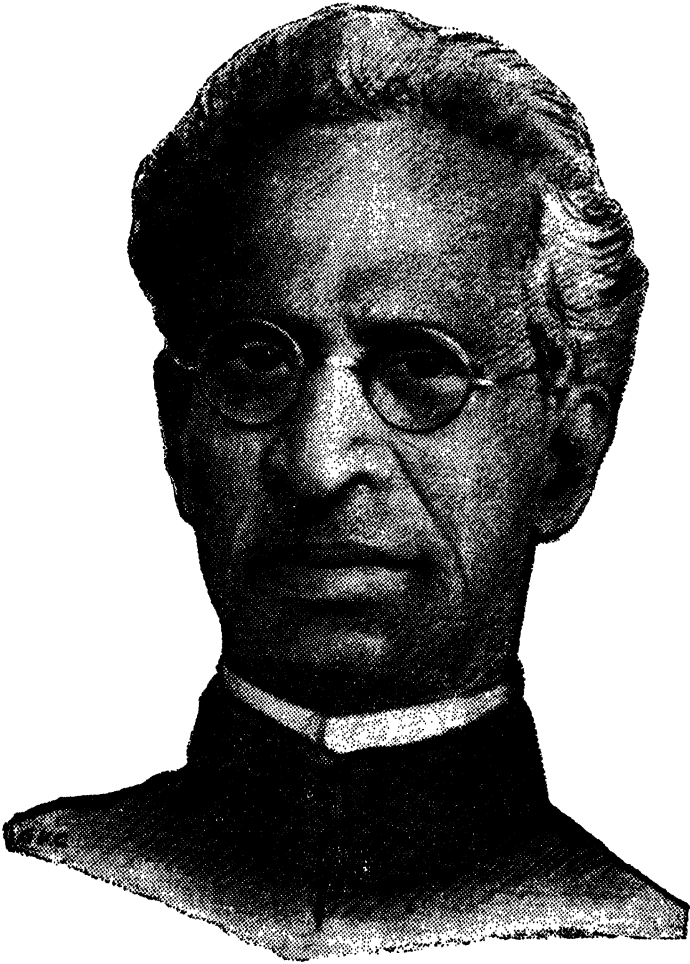
Thereafter he let off a double-edged fling, aimed at the bureaucracy and Subhas :—"We don't possess any radios or newspapers to broadcast our messages; our only radio is in exile." He capped it all by declaring that he would prefer thieves, robbers and even dacoits to run the Government of this country, provided they were Indians and not foreigners. His crowning statement was that they were all ready to wind up the Indian National Congress, provided freedom was first obtained and the Muslim League was allowed to run the Government of the country. Once freedom was obtained, the *raison d'être* of the existence of the Congress was destroyed.

Vallabhbhai's hatred of British Imperialism extends even to their language. He is not one of those who believe that long after the Empire of England vanishes, the English language will still hold sway over us. Perhaps the only meeting he has addressed in the English tongue during the last fifteen years was when the writer took him to address a Christians' meeting. "I have given up talking in English in public meetings," was his defence. When the writer called him again he declined to address the Christians as he said they expected him to speak only in English. The first meeting he addressed the Christians has historic associations. Straight from the meeting, Vallabhbhai, Pandit Malaviya (Mrs. Kamala Nehru was also present at that meeting at the Cowasji Jehangir Hall) and others walked to Bori Bunder and sat on the road throughout the whole night with thousands and thousands of other citizens with rain pouring on them until the crowds were dispersed by a lathi charge and the leaders arrested. Amongst the casualties was one dead patriot on that famous October morning of 1930.

Vallabhbhai's features are frankly ugly but his countenance is stern. He talks so little and can walk in utter silence for miles together. Maulana Shaukat Ali described him as a volcano covered with snow. His silence is ominous at times and no one can easily fathom what's passing on in his mind. He will not utter anything more than what the occasion will demand. If Jawaharlal will run into miles of statements, the Sirdar will be content with muttering in monosyllables. The Pandit may roam the whole world and yet be listless like Ulysses of old; but the Sirdar won't step out of his beloved Gujarat; at the most he will be stationed in Bombay to fly away within a moment's back to his villages. The Pandit loves to stride the Continents; the Sirdar's *forte* is his suzerainty of the villages. He does not pretend to carry on himself the weight of ponderous knowledge; he seldom reads. A pea-

## **MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN**

sant is devoid of all that, is his reply and then again he is wrapt up in silence. The late Mahadev Desai once wrote that the upper part of the face of the Sardar reminded one of Lenin and the lower part of the Lokmanya Tilak. What he has achieved reminds us of both!



**SIR SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN**



## SIR ŚARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN

"WHEN God created man, He over-baked him and found him a negro; He half-baked another, the result being a European; and then He baked well and got His man just right and perfect—it was an Indian!",

stated the most impressive speaker of Hindustan in June, 1931 at a party thrown in his honour by the Three Arts Circle in Bombay. The intellectuals of the city, the high-brows and also the low-brows, with a sprinkling of pretty faces, gathered on the top of Malabar Hill, with a magnificent view of the ocean encircling the isle. We looked down from those heights at the vast expanse of the sea lying at our feet. The chief guest of the evening was one of the world's greatest living philosophers. He dwelt on the glorious and illimitable theme of Man, his genius and insanity, his colour and sentiment. "Aiwan Rafat," was then the seat of the smart set of the town, under the cultured aegis of the Three Arts Circle, with that colourful, domineering and explosive dame, Atiya Begum, as its moving spirit. They entertained poets, philosophers, princes and potentates as well as noted dancers, singers and musicians. The low-brows and the proletariat like us managed to get a glimpse of the distinguished guests after a magnificent introduction by Atiya Begum, magnifying our claims, and then we did full justice to the appetising turkish delights strewn around those tiny oriental tables, not failing, however, to nod approval of musical talent, whether we were musically inclined or not! It was a miniature Taj! Gone are all those glories and faded are the memories of visits of such diverse people like Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das, George Bernard Shaw, Pavlova, Kapurthala, Dame Clara Butt and other celebrities. That dynamic donation collector of public causes, Bapsey Sabawalla (sister of Sir Cowasji Jehangir) has now cornered that crest. When the



writer enquired of her, "Aren't you having a house-warming party now that you are the proud owner of that beautiful Aiwan Rafat?"; he was silenced with the swift retort, "No more of those gay parties. It will now be a cold mansion, entertaining none!"

Radhakrishnan held that small cultured gathering spellbound as he has done everywhere, in every continent, whether it be in Harvard, London, Paris, Berlin, Bombay, Calcutta or Tokyo. Cicero's tribute to Aristotle that he was a river of liquid gold could be aptly applied to this greatest living authority on Hindu philosophy. Words flow from his mouth like water from a well-regulated fountain. It is a joy to hear him endlessly, you can never get tired. His mind is laden with the wisdom of the ages and his words flow like pearls of wisdom from his mouth. His speech makes us live through the lives of the wisest men who have walked this earth, and for every festering spot of humanity, he is ready with his calm, dignified and philosophic explanation. No Indian can speak like him, though the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri perhaps has a more polished style and a better command of diction. But there are some utterances of Radhakrishnan which will live for ever for their wealth of historical comparisons, ethical significance and superb mastery of prose.

Eloquence is taboo to some philosophers. To them, philosophy and a gifted tongue cannot hold sway in a single tenement, much less flourish in joint estate. Radhakrishnan possesses this "handicap." His captivating speech prejudices this critical school, but his mind baffles them. Radhakrishnan is that type of philosopher whose mind brings down the elevated knowledge of his kind for the benefit of the common man through the medium of his gifted tongue. He brings down the wisdom of philosophy from the clouds into the streets. He has worked that miracle by means of his powerful speech. The allusions and imagery that adorn his speech transport philosophy

from high Mount Olympus to the low plains inhabited by average men. His interests being varied, philosophy does not eat out his soul. He wisely heeds Plato's warning that philosophy is an elegant thing if anyone modestly meddles with it; but if he is conversant with it more than is becoming, it corrupts the man.

Dismayed with the sight of philosophers, Frederick the Great threatened to punish a province by having it governed by philosophers—so intense was his hostility towards them! Bismarck bore nothing but contempt for philosophy and condemned its exponents who demanded to examine every measure placed for the people's acceptance. What autocrats have always failed to realise is that insurrections are dangerous but the revolts of intelligence are more dangerous still!

Meeting philosophers outside the realm of their books is not a happy event! The magic screen is instantly torn off when you meet them in flesh and blood. The exalted, philosophic touch will be preserved as long as the contacts are through their works. The moment they are out of their towers of ivory, they begin to sprawl with their feet of clay. Hence, never make an attempt to meet a philosopher! It is different, however, with Radhakrishnan! He himself has sat at the feet of the world's greatest living philosophers and drunk deep at the fountain of their knowledge. Radhakrishnan is one whose personal touch does not cause any heart-burning. The magic screen put up by his works is not wrenched off. There is not much difference between the man whose personality flits across the pages of his works and the real man, in flesh and blood! Meeting him, before or after reading his works, would stamp upon you the impress of his versatility and the charm of his personality. Locke said that when God made the prophet, he did not unmake the man in him! Both the prophet and the man are combined in correct proportions in this Indian philosopher.

Radhakrishnan is the living glory of Indian philosophy. If Einstein's tribute to the whole body of Hindu philosophy that "most philosophers are indebted to the Hindus" be true, then Radhakrishnan's place in their galaxy is assured. The world has witnessed the run of more than nineteen civilisations, out of which no less than sixteen crashed before the onrush of any foreign impact. But the civilisation of Hindustan has survived the onslaught of the ages! The inexorable verdict of Fate which has fallen to the lot of other civilisations has not yet been visited upon it. Catastrophes of flood and fire have not touched it, much less than pressure of a series of foreign invasions. Radhakrishnan has produced the key for this survival. "Hindu thought never developed the Monroe doctrines in matters of culture. Even in ancient times when India grew enough spiritual food to satisfy her own people, there was no recorded period when she was not ready and eager to appreciate the product of other people's imagination." Radhakrishnan has proved it historically that the essential Hinduism laying greater stress on conduct and not on creed is capable of absorbing any school of thought at whatever stage of development in its fold, without forcing it to take an alien form. He is frank enough to admit that when a great religion dates back to thousands of years, with such an enormous amount of tradition, culture and activity, it must needs find things both of weakness and strength inevitably rooted in its bosom.

His monumental work, *Indian Philosophy* in two stupendous volumes is a meritorious performance and is exceedingly authoritative. He makes a masterful survey of the six leading brahmanical systems and gives the most lucid analysis of each system. The author's exposition of all the subtle theories of Hinduism is fascinating.

Though Radhakrishnan gives the impression that he is a philosopher of remote eminence, he comes down from the attitude of his abstractions, to the lowlands of realities.

"Hindus today are Hindus by apology. They do not show by action the greatness of their cultural heritage," is the voice of his crusading gospel against decay. He warns against the fatal era occurring in a religion when forms of orthodoxy are mistaken for spirituality. He suggests the panacea when he clinches the issue by his historic phrase :—" *The Yoga of Krishna must be combined with the archery of Arjuna.*"

The Indian philosopher's further sublime exhortation runs :—

"The greatest of all forms of worship is the service of man," and quoting a Sanskrit poet, he holds forth :  
"I do not want an earthly kingdom; I do not want a celestial paradise; I do not want a blissful state of the future; but I want to lighten the load of sorrow which weighs on the whole creation, at least to a little extent."

Radhakrishnan imparts the essence of this sovereign advice and has shown in unmistakable terms what is meant by the service of God through his fellowmen! He has impressed the final note of Hinduism in his own inimitable style:—"God is the infinite spirit who is both in us and out of us. If God were not in us, there would be no sense of need; if God were not out of us, there would be no sense of worship."

Radhakrishnan brings to bear the most refreshing ideas on Culture, as to what it is, how it is acquired and how it is lost. For him, the term Culture, does not merely mean intellectual attainments. To him it is a certain kind of elasticity of mind, the hospitality of one's disposition that accepts all views sympathetically and the largeness of heart that feels for the distressed and weak. Culture does not lie in remembering a mass of curious details about the dates of birth of the greatest heroes of the world or the interesting names of the fastest ships that cross the Atlantic. He insists with Plato that the culture of the soul is the first and the fairest thing that the best of men can ever possess. The eye of the soul must never be blind whatever may

happen to its gaze, even if it turns its points on the false and the fleeting. Culture, according to our savant, must never assist social or intellectual tyranny. "It must produce sweetness of temper, sanity of mind and strength of spirit."

It is in that light that he strongly advocates the study of astronomy as a sure curative for our pride and rank self-esteem. Radhakrishnan reiterates with an early writer of the sixteenth century that astronomy should be an indispensable part of education for it will restrain human pride and fill the mind with a sense of the majesty of God. A French thinker tendered the same advice laden with a spiritual flavour :—"Begin every day by meditating a few minutes on the majesty of God as displayed by the mighty works of His creation."

Radhakrishnan is out to revive the soul of India. He is the walking, talking and invigorating philosopher of Hindustan who rouses the intellect and blazes the prairie of Indian nationalism. His mind is the richest background of our whole national movement. Investing the individual with a sense of his inner greatness, he rouses the finest feelings within him and urges him on to great efforts for the salvation of his country. "No nation ever made progress if it did not have a soul!" runs the flaming message from his golden voice and erudite pen. Philosophy has taught him its two greatest lessons—"sustain" and "abstain." He sustains the idea of nationalism and raises his voice in its brilliant defence. Though he may abstain from the deadly struggles of national resistance, his heart harks back to the central theme of emancipation. Having answered for himself the profound questions of "Why," "How" and "Whither" propounded by philosophy, which have worried philosophers throughout the ages when beset with hard realities, Radhakrishnan's mind goes marching along into the limitless field of Indian nationalism, fortified as its main intellectual rampart.

"The passion for political freedom is running high amongst us. But like everything else, freedom is won within and not given from without. The country we love is not a geographical area but a spiritual possession. Until we identify ourselves with it through our mind, heart and will, wisdom, love and service, sanity, sweetness and strength, our country is bound to be in its present intolerable condition. Our lack of interest in communities other than our own, our social tyrannies which makes cowards and automatons of most of us, our religious fanaticism, are all wrongs which require immediate correction. The forces we have to contend against are within us and must be stamped out,"

was his eloquent message to University students. He has expressed himself lucidly in another way:—

"The cry of Swaraj is the outer expression of the anxiety to preserve the provinces of the soul . . . It is not India that originally propounded the maxim, 'My country right or wrong' . . . The Indo-British connection may be the outer expression of the ultimate synthesis between the East and the West."

Our philosopher's devastating analysis runs:—

"The teaching of the West is mainly responsible for our present unrest. The unrest is a tribute to the British work in India and not a reproach . . . But smaller minds interpret the British connection in a more sordid way. If Empire means markets for the central power, men, money and munitions for planting the flag in the extremes of the world, if it means the massing of troops in a variety of colours against similar groupings on battle fronts, if it means the exploitation of the weak and the backward, such an empire is a vulgarity, a reaction, a danger to the peace of the world. The bonds of friendship are more solid defence than soldiers and machine guns . . . It is no use talking to Indians about their ingratitude for the benefits Britain has conferred on India; she has built railways, telegraphs, irrigation works, has systematised law and made administration efficient. Italy will do that for Abyssinia and Japan for Manchuko. Any one who wants to run an efficient administration will have to do that. But these things are conferred at the cost

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

of our manhood, at the price of our dignity. The kingdoms of this world are not a compensation for the loss of one's soul . . . In such circumstances. I shudder to think of the future . . ."

He got down to the root of the problem and felt the pangs of patriotism.

"It is the duty of every patriot to resist despotism, to resist this economic, religious and political tyranny . . . In a country like ours, where we have to resist despotism on every side, patriotism may mean poverty, unemployment, exile, imprisonment and even death. There are those who believe that the country will take care of itself if 'I secure jobs for my children or for my community.' They are not friends of the country's freedom but its selfish foes." He puts the whole problem in a nut-shell when he affirmed that "our hearts are anti-British but we act pro-British Imperialists!"

Having thoroughly analysed the causes of Indian unrest, Radhakrishnan is emphatically of the opinion that Britain must come to terms with the Mahatma. To him, a man like Gandhiji is a seer of the ages and Britain would find it hard to secure a nobler adversary than him. If the opponents do not see the gold in him, their metal will get rusty and destroyed. After lecturing at Oxford on Indian Philosophy he returned to India in 1938 and declared, with the vision of a seer:—

"I have impressed upon the men in British public life that in India there is at the head of the movement a leader and a saint, the like of whom is not born every year or generation or every century . . . If Gandhiji falls, a major conflict of the most unprecedented character would be provoked. The great Indian Mutiny or the Non-Co-operation Movement would be nothing compared to that which would break out if the just and reasonable demands of Indians were not met."

It was in this spirit of genuine admiration that he presented Gandhiji on his seventieth birthday with a symposium of tributes from the finest minds of the East and West. Radhakrishnan is a fervent worshipper at the shrines of

the two greatest sons of Hindustan—Gandhi and Tagore. In his *Philosophy of Tagore* he has rendered a captivating and faithful account of the Poet's philosophy and outlook on life. He is now the great Vice-Chancellor of the Benares University, the beacon of the Indian student world.

The British bureaucracy will have to wrest with Radhakrishnan's superb intelligence. The insurrection of his intelligence is a formidable danger to Britain. You cannot trifle with that, especially when it fires all the minds of university students at every university centre of this vast country. Louis XVI seeing in his temple prison the works of Voltaire and Rousseau remarked : "Those two men have destroyed France." The poor king was forced to pay his tribute to philosophy! Though fully conscious of our chains of slavery and the loss of our most cherished possessions, Radhakrishnan would derive complete and final comfort like that philosopher who when asked whether he was robbed of anything after his city was annihilated, thus gravely replied: "I saw nobody carrying away knowledge!" Our philosopher lights the candle in the darkness and sets the entire Indian sky aflame !







**SIR C. V. RAMAN**



## SIR C. V. RAMAN

**H**ISTORIANS narrate the story of Archimedes, who on his having solved a complex mathematical problem, leapt out of his bath and rushed out screaming into the streets, "Eureka! Eureka!"

Our greatest living scientist does not shout "Eureka! Eureka!" on the streets as if that would hold the long lost keys to the Promised Land. When a mere lad of seven, stricken with serious illness he had shouted for a discharging Leyden jar. Indian children have been thrilled with the story of Shri Ramchandra who when a boy cried hoarse for the moon! Even the ingenuity and stratagem of his step-mother, Queen Kaikaye worked in vain to soothe the immortal hero of *Ramayana* until a palace maid produced a mirror, reflecting the moon! When the jar discharged, the boy prodigy instantly quietened, slept soundly and thereafterwards recovered from his illness. Such was the unique display of the child's scientific propensity.

The son of a humble pedagogue provided with the only luxury of a violin, Raman attained unrivalled scholarship in his teens and lived to enjoy world celebrity before he was fifty. Ten years of his life were wasted in a drab Government department dealing with statistics. But Fate triumphed and rescued him from a government job, that graveyard of many an Indian genius. It delivered him into the welcome hands of that titan of a Vice-chancellor of the Calcutta University, the late Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, the father of the bold, statesmanlike and patriotic Dr. Shyamprasad Mukherji, who during the last year threw up the Finance Ministership of the Bengal Government on finding himself powerless to stem the arrogance of the bureaucracy entrenched with the military elements. Once Raman was installed in the Chair of Physics of the Calcutta University, his

genius blossomed and flowered into the "Raman Effect" and a thousand other scientific discoveries.

There was no difficulty for Raman to obtain a job. Fate did not consign him to that miserable fate that took the toll of the life of Ramanujam, one of the greatest mathematical geniuses of the world. Indian Universities under the fostering care of the British, had become factories of uniform inefficiency, grinding out thousands of graduates, devoid of energy, vigour and patriotism. The Universities had buried talent under their crushing weight of examinations and a maddening craze for sheer superficial book knowledge. Ramanujam who failed in the Intermediate Examination of the Madras University not once but seven times, was the classic example. Grievously disappointed, he took to a petty clerkship in the Customs. Recognition came too late when he managed to go to Cambridge where again he lived a precarious existence. Before he died, the world of Mathematics recognized in him one of its greatest leaders. Ramanujam passed away bereft of bare physical nourishment when he was scarcely thirty. The celebrated Austrian composer, Mozart, died when he was thirty-six and thus deprived the world of greater productions which would have inevitably followed had he lived longer. Ramanujam's name was thus added to the unhappy list of the world's great neglected and forlorn souls. Cold, nevertheless true comfort is conveyed by one of Aldous Huxley's characters:—"They can't understand you; you're above them. Their neglect is compliment to your mind."

Ramanujam's cruel handicaps did not weigh Raman down. He was more fortunate. Before he was seventeen, he mustered sufficient courage to contribute to *Nature* and the *Philosophical Journal* when his teachers quailed at the simple thought of forwarding his contributions, which ultimately appeared with the editorial notice "communicated direct by the author." Then he topped his M.A. examination as well as the Indian Audit Service Examination, which

straightway obtained for him a lucrative appointment in the Finance Department of the Government of India. He might have still continued there and retired at the most as a glorified Finance Secretary, a post not yet open to an Indian. He was assuredly one of those persons to whom the truth of Livy's significant reference to Cato Major would apply:—

“In illo viro, tantum robor corporis et animi fuit, ut quocunque loco natus, esset, fortunatum sibi facturus videretur.”

“In that man there was so great strength of body and mind, that in whatever station he had been born it seemed as though he would make his fortune.”

Raman got into that service through a competitive examination by the sheer strength of merit, for which his race is famous. The Madras Brahmins have a genius for figures and finance. They have no equals in India. Make them sit in any competitive examination under the sun and if one of them does not top the list, be sure that they will at least capture the most number of seats therein. You can fence round any service on the face of the earth with the most formidable wall of competitive regulations that human ingenuity can devise and you will find that the Madras Brahmin has managed to scale it with ease. The Madras Brahmin with his *dal*, *rice*, *bhaji* and *buttermilk* has penetrated the bureaucratic holy of holies at Simla and Delhi. The Government of India hierarchy of Audits and Accounts will be at sea without the touch of a Madras Brahmin. Successive Finance Members of the Government of India, even the whole line of them imported from the City of London, including the last one, blustering Sir James Grigg, whom his patron has now promoted to the War Secretaryship in the British Cabinet, could not do without the exceedingly able assistance of Madras Brahmins. Even the Finance regime of a *Purna* Swarajist State of Hindustan will be unsound, nay incomplete without the brainy complement of the Madras Brahmin contingent. They have wrested

leadership from the field of stenography to that of the Secretariat and there is none so capable and efficient to displace them. They have successfully invaded every place of vantage in the country, including the Fourth Estate. In short, they are the indispensables of the land.

Raman was one of those Madras Brahmins who having thus figured high in the competitive lists spent his twenties and early thirties in scrutinizing accounts of the Finance Department. True he acquired varied knowledge of several branches of Government work, viz., currency and remittance operations, savings banks, life insurance, salary and pension audits and the final preparation of budgets. Had he preferred to remain there for all time, the world of science would have lost one of its finest ornaments to rust in the dignified ease of a pensioned life. But Raman's enthusiasm for science was so dynamic and irresistible that he obeyed the call of the laboratory and won. He gave up that dry drudgery at the desk's dull, dead wood for the charm of science. Science which Adam Smith thought to be the great antidote to sheer, ungovernable enthusiasm has on the other hand increased the enthusiasm of our scientist. Raman's life is nothing but bursting with enthusiasm for his mistress. His mind is the repository of those twin virtues embodied in that statement that

"Science is a first rate piece of furniture for a man's upper chamber, if he has common sense on the ground floor."

Having once set upon his course, Raman marched on from strength to strength. Bengal mothered his earliest triumph, though he later cultivated a sort of prejudice against her people. He did not like their way of going about as the chosen people of the land. Yet he proudly acknowledged his debt of gratitude to Bengal for all the early opportunities of his career. His work in the Department of Physics along with his interest in the activities of the Association of the Cultivation of Science at Calcutta

started his most romantic career in the world of science. It was soon to be startled by the "Raman Effect" on which alone nearly two thousand original contributions have been made throughout the world. The blue water of the seas had always fired Raman's mind and set him on his famous trek. The blue flash of the Mediterranean powerfully drew him into the history and sequence of light and colour so as to ultimately lead him into investigation from the time his heart was set on science as a vocation. The announcement of the "Raman Effect" in 1928, revealing the phenomenon that light may also change in colour was hailed in the world of science with the same enthusiasm that first greeted X-rays and Radio-activity. Physicists, chemists, and mathematicians warmly received "Raman Effect" and derived lasting benefits from it. In theorizing and experimenting Raman followed in no established routes but daringly cut new ground. He established a chain of reserve workers, determined to put his country on the map of the scientific world. The award of the Nobel Prize for Physics and the conferment of numerous honours both from the highest scientific quarters and the Universities testified to his intensive scientific outlook and achievements. Honorary Doctorates from Indian, Continental, British and American Universities were flung at him like berries. He accomplished his biggest results in the limited laboratories situated within the boundaries of his own land. His genius had to be content with experimenting with whatever his poor country provided him. Every field of scientific research interested him. Mechanics, Light and Sound. X-ray and Radio became too insufficient a sphere of activity to absorb him. "Give me the facilities," he is said to have challenged the late Sir Ashutosh at Calcutta, "and in five years I will hand over to you the Nobel Prize." None had translated into reality a boast of this magnitude. Yet Raman's inborn genius rose to the occasion and the event followed as light succeeds darkness.



From Calcutta, he went over to take charge of the Institute of Science at Bangalore where again he conducted considerable research and trained a host of talented investigators who are now spread all over the country. He broke tradition inside the Institute by admitting women research students and even flinging wide open a door, open only on state occasions, remarking that "every day he entered the Institute was a state occasion and therefore the door, hitherto closed, should be kept open." Founding the Indian Academy of Science, Raman led the way in co-ordinating and discussing the work done by his colleagues, students and other fellow-scientists so as to give shape and direction to their activities. He made the Institute of Science the live wire of scientific theory and experiment in the country, with a notable record to its credit.

Raman realised like all true scientists that science without a correct aspect of human values could be turned into a barbarous monster. He wanted true science to be the foundation of education in this country. The study of science, pure and simple, without the balance of human values would only lead to ravages of the type of the first World War which resulted in that of the second! Raman has cultivated the scientific habit of the mind with a perfectly human background which has now elevated him to the level of a genius. Science to him does not constitute electric lights, motor cars, aeroplanes and several other comforts and conveniences. It connotes human progress, construction without destruction. He was out to harness science to the chariot of humanity. A false notion is abroad that science can create untold wealth; but it is equally true that science also furnishes the armoury with weapons of destruction. Through the medium of science, he aimed at the destruction of the last vestiges of man's animal ancestry. Science opened out new vistas of human thought and man was to be acquainted with his vital, innate connection with the universe.

Hence Raman's hostility to mere scholasticism. It got the upper hand when the study of science was neglected. He deemed scholasticism as the veritable enemy of true scholarship. Scholasticism resulted in the production of second and third rate books; whilst those who crammed superficial knowledge contained in them were loaded with rewards, appointments and professorships. Though he was proud of some of the products of our Universities, he was depressed with the myriad poor copies built on foreign models. Raman frequently reminded us of the ancient episode of the burning of the library of 400,000 volumes by Khalif Omar. He despaired of anyone ever reading so many volumes, even if they were spared the rage of the Khalif who decreed that if those books agreed with the *Koran* they were superfluous and if they didn't, they were worthy of instantaneous destruction! Raman's hatred of mere book knowledge ingrained in our Universities is so considerable that he advocates even the periodical burning of the libraries of the world, in the interests of true scholarship, though not on the extensive and indiscriminate scale of the irate Khalif. That reminds us of the episode in the life of the father of Indian scientists, Prafulla Chandra Ray, who once declared that he was not a text-book professor. When his students asked him to recommend them any book, he requested them to make a bonfire of them even if they had already purchased them and then attend his lectures.

Raman is the typical scientific genius conquering time and space in an instant. Likes and dislikes dominate him though he woos science thoroughly and whole-heartedly. He cannot be persuaded to drop a letter; instead he will telegraph, thinking it would be much easier. Some public body requested him to serve them on their Advisory Committee. No polite refusal followed but the despatch of the entire correspondence to the senders with the curt announcement that as he would have nothing to do with them, it would be better that he did not retain anyone of their

letters! He refused to serve on the National Planning Committee of the Indian National Congress; and at the same time disappointed Government by not being associated with their Scientific and Industrial Research Board. He loved the strong hand in everything, the hand that could get things done quickly and efficiently. In short, he admired all the good things the totalitarian states had achieved. He was furious when the Madras Congress Ministry under Rajagopalachari closed down the Coimbatore Forest Research Institute. He denounced the hand of mere dabblers in things scientific and of permanent human value! The scientific outlook and method established in Russia are what he most admires and wants his own country to adopt.

Raman is the youngest, brightest and most invaluable member of the triumvirate team of scientists of Hindustan. All the three were born in, or associated with Bengal. One of them has passed away; the other has passed the three score and ten years allotted to the life by the psalmist and the last one is still young and holds forth promise of still greater achievement in the future. The late Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray and Sir C. V. Raman constitute the scientific triumvirate of Hindustan. One secured the Nobel Prize for Physics, another acquired fame in Botany and the last one was overweighted with fame in the sphere of Chemistry. Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, hailed as the Darwin of Botany, possessed poetic vision and the scientist's eye. He proclaimed and proved the unity of the living with the non-living; and thereby his love for plants became classic. Once the women in his audience at Paris were about to burst into tears as the famed botanist electrocuted plants and they twitched and twirled under the shock. He thus preached the unity of life and brotherhood of all nations when he profoundly stated that the life story of the plant *Mimosa* exactly reproduced the history of nations.

P. C. Ray is the greatest septuagenarian bachelor of our public life, with his "chemical children and grandchildren" spread all over the land, occupying chairs of science in over half a dozen Universities of the country. Impeccable and inspiring in his state, he is still the proud possessor of a fund of energy to accomplish mountains of work. He has also shown that he can wield his pen with as much facility and ease as he handles a test tube. He has been our most eminent master of the Laboratory which has been the veritable nursery of all the young and experienced chemists of Hindustan.

The late Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, a genius of the highest order was a patriot of calibre. When once the British National Anthem replaced *Vande Mataram* in an Indian gathering, he reproved the people gathered around and cried out aloud "Aren't you ashamed? Have you forgotten your *Vande Mataram*?"

Prafulla Chandra Ray, the Grand Old Man of Our Science, declared in the hey-day of the Non-Co-operation period, two decades ago that *science could afford to wait but Swaraj could not!* An Englishman said of him that when the aged savant dwelt upon the misdeeds of British rulers in India, he felt that he would sooner serve under him than be criticised by him!

In an extempore convocation address to the graduates of the Bombay University over ten years ago, Raman flung a vigorous retort at Sir Samuel Hoare, the then Secretary of State for India who insulted Indians with his statement "Let the dogs bark, the caravan will move on." Our Scientist boldly expressed his wish only to reverse that statement:—

"Let the dogs of fanaticism and reaction bark, but the glorious caravan of Indian nation will move on with irresistible force."

## **MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN**

Raman's soul must have moved in unison and harmony with that of another illustrious man, General Smuts, who declaimed his robust faith:—

“Mankind is once more on the move . . . the very foundations have been shaken . . . the tents have been struck and the great caravan of Humanity is once more on the march.”



**UDAY SHANKAR**



## UDAY SHANKAR

**I**T was 1935 and the famous dancing troupe was covering the foremost twenty-one cities of Hindustan. It had already traversed the continents of Europe and America, marching from strength to strength, trailing the ancient bright light of the East through the modern West. They broke journey for a two-day fixture at Poona. The two charming partners were quietly enjoying a meal. They seemed to be a pair of perfect love-birds, each sublimely matched with the other. The present writer and his young friend, Abbas Fakirmahomed Sajun, the rice plutocrat of Bombay, occupied another table. One more table was filled up and the diners turned out to be Vishnudas Shirali and Ravindra Shanker. Only six diners in all occupied three tables that night in that big dining hall of Poona Hotel. One of them picked up courage and drew blood!

"Aren't you the famous Uday Shankar?" accosted the writer and that young dancing god without leaping to his feet was overwhelmed in a mass of humility so as to shame this unabashed and venturesome querist. "No . . . no . . . not the famous . . . no . . . no!," beautifully broke in the dancer and his modest humility graced beauty's crown. The highest when it stooped touched the very fringe of paradise! The captivating, little woman, more Indian than any daughter of the soil, who seemed to be a reincarnation of one of Indra's celestial danseuses, smiled the smile of a goddess!

"I am dancing the life of the people and of our gods," rapturously exclaimed Uday Shankar when he danced to crowded audiences in the capitals of the West. Another major ambition of this greatest living Indian artiste was to dance the life of Gandhi and he did it exceedingly well in his superb ballets, "The Rhythm of Life" and



"Labour and Machinery." It was a Bombay Mayor who greeting Shankar and Simkie, applauded that an hour with these artistes was enough to counteract lifetimes of anti-Indian propaganda. The American critic went into ecstasies when the celebrated pair was in the land of the almighty dollar. "If this is India, America is a howling wilderness." Let us salute this youngest ambassador of Hindustan who has been so ably assisted by that Parisienne dancing *belle*! Uday Shankar has been the youngest and most successful of the Indian heralds in the world abroad, gliding and flitting with the feet of the gods across the footlights of the world. Gifts of all sorts poured on him from the laps of the gods in magnificent admiration of his matchless skill. Nijinski's daughter presented him with the ring of the Czars. The cobra ring of the lamented Rudolph Valentino was also gifted to him. Anna Pavlova was not content until she parted with her gold watch and the late Gaekwar of Baroda presented him with the entire ancient treatise of the language of gestures. The crowned heads of Europe cordially congratulated him—the late King George of England and the Kings of Denmark, Sweden and Norway eulogised his brilliant work. Tagore hailed him as the most worthy son of Hindustan and Pandit Jawaharlal despite his dislike of things ancient displayed considerable partiality for his art.

The incomparable Simkie is indeed another gift of the gods to this ancient land.

But O, she dances such a way !  
No sun upon an Easter-day,  
Is half so fine a sight . . .

A blossom of rhythm twined around an exotic form, with charm of body, pose and gesture, Simkie is the living embodiment of the grace and grandeur of ancient Indian womanhood reminding us of Indra's renowned quartette team, Menaka, Tilotthama, Urvashi and Rumbha. Simone Barbiere became the famous Simkie. She was only a girl

of sixteen, when she saw Shankar dancing in Paris and she threw up her career as a pianist and followed him. The moment she saw him dancing in the Paris salons, she instantly became interested in his art. She rose on the ladder of fame simultaneously with Shankar's meteoric rise. Simkie surpassed herself as Uday Shankar's partner and as Parvati in that classic dance-drama *Shiva Parvati Nrittya Dvandva*—she is the very essence of the drama.

One great woman made Uday Shankar; but he made another woman as great as the former, and wrested for her the homage and admiration of the whole of the sub-continent of India. Together they achieved fame; the Shanker-Simkie team overshadowed the reputation built up by the earlier Pavlova-Shankar partnership. The Shankar-Simkie team earned the most enviable place in the history of ballet. Uday Shankar turned out a sensational dancing success when Pavlova discovered him and made him her partner in the Radha-Krishna Ballet in her American and European tours. However, when he parted company with the ballerina and sought to give expression to his own individuality by setting up his own show, all the European agents cold-shouldered him: "You were wonderful Monsieur, with the Madame; but you are nothing without her!" His courage never deserted him and though his pile of finest press clippings did not cut any ice with the agents, he was determined to go ahead, until little Simone Barbiere came along and watched him patiently and mastered the job at his hands. Little Simone turned out to be a little goddess dropped from the heavens, with her feet moulded on the anvil of Indra's Court. Shankar had earned a little fortune in company with the Russian ballerina; but he seemed to have exhausted most of it when he went over to Paris to run the show all by himself. The tide turned when Simkie accompanied him on the piano at the Paris cabarets, with Eastern tunes.

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

It is indeed a pity that Indian genius does not get recognition of its own soil and has first to pass its test on alien lands. Tagore became famous here only when his works were translated into English and his talents first emblazoned in the West. So also with Shankar. Pavlova returned to England after her first triumphant tour in India, was determined to produce an entirely Indian ballet. Comolata Bannerji, the gifted daughter of Sir Albion Bannerji, had written Indian ballet music with which Pavlova was thrilled. The difficulty was to obtain someone who would play opposite the celebrated ballerina and also arrange the choreography. Just then Uday Shankar was in London as an art student under the special care of Sir William Rothenstein. A meeting was arranged between Shankar and Pavlova which resulted in his becoming her partner for the Radha-Krishna ballet. They became a raging success and together they toured Europe and America, the Indian ballet being the most popular item on their programme. Discontent, however, drove Uday Shankar to steer his own bark; he would not play second fiddle to any one. He would either rise to fame by creating something of his own or rot in obscurity. He attained his object and did not have to look back at all.

Tara Ali Baig, that gifted young woman, has narrated the incident of her first meeting with Anna Pavlova in Switzerland. The mere mention that she was acquainted with Comolata Bannerji drew warm kisses and flowers from the renowned danseuse; such was her feeling of indebtedness to the Bengali lady whose piece of original work first put Uday Shankar on the top of the show.

Shankar's ambition was to dance the dance of his people and his gods. Dances occupied a foremost place in the cultural life of ancient India and he was determined to make his people live those days again, in all their pristine glory. He did not want the ball-room variety of dancing to be transplanted into this country. It had already

done its mischief. The tragedy of it was that hundreds of denationalised Indians, wasted night after night in ball-room dancing but found not an hour even to witness pure Indian dancing! Shankar had already been convinced of the truth that "social dissipation as witnessed in the ball-room is the abettor of pride, the instigator of jealousy; it is the sacrificial altar of health, it is the defiler of the soul, it is the avenue of lust and it is the curse of every town in the West."

Dancing flourished in India under royal patronage and on the strength of the popular demand. Every Indian state possessed its bands of dancers, musicians and painters. People of respected families occasionally indulged in these cultural pastimes. Folk-dancing was popular with the masses throughout the centuries. But the onrush of Western materialism in the wake of British rule changed the aspect of things. The dance art was practised for a long time by a caste or guild; but with social decay and demoralisation, these castes were ostracised and the public lost its touch with real dance art.

One of the most beautiful dance techniques of the world was developed in India. The Russian ballet dancing and the Indian dancing possess the most distinguished dance-techniques of the world.

"The Hindu dance aims at a kind of visible poetry with a definite meaning. It attempts to tell a story or to allude to some events or divine personalities by means of formal gestures presented in rhythmic sequence accompanied by song and music. Self-restraint and convention play important part and the pose and the movement of the head, eyes and hands and feet are used to convey definite meanings."

All movable parts of the body combine to produce the desired effect on the mind of the audience but the gestures of the hands, known as the *mudras* are the most telling movements. All the movements are clear cut and

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

precise. Ballet has been defined as "the maximum exploitation of physical beauty in motion." The Indian Ballet of Uday Shankar and other danseuses like Menaka and Sadhona Bose is a picture of imperishable beauty, full of intricate technique of the soil, with ancient art moulded on truth, vigour and beauty.

Uday Shankar succeeded in banding together some of the scattered dance forms of Hindustan, recreating them with their ancient glory. He deeply realized the force behind Longfellow's observations :

"I love these rural dances—from my heart, I love them. This world, at best, is full of care and sorrow; the life of a poor man is so stained with the sweat of his brow, there is so much toil and struggling and anguish and disappointment here below, that I gaze with delight on a scene where all these are laid aside and forgotten, and the heart of the toll-worn peasant seems to throw off its load."

Shades of the dance numbers—the Kumaon grass cutters, the Bhil, Spring and Harvest dances, the Ras Leela, Radha-Krishna and the most significant of them all, the Rhythm of Life!

That brilliant erratic artiste-poet, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya did not mince words when he openly wanted to turn art into a political weapon. He sang :

The world is full of paddy  
And the world is full of wheat  
Yet there are tens of thousands  
Who have no food to eat!

Harindranath aimed at making art universal—not the privilege of a few but the birth-right of the whole nation. He produced a striking revue and presented it in varying impressive forms—dance and music, drama and painting. Through his Coloured Festival, his Art Players, presented every phase of Indian life : the mendicants on the high-roads, the boatmen who cling to their quiet philosophy despite their poverty, the curd-seller who still remained

## UDAY SHANKAR

the best critic of society (including that of Harin himself !) the street-singer, without a stone to lay his head upon, then Radha as the milkmaid and Radha as Krishna's lover, pining under the moonlight and the Marwari women displaying splendour and exotic glamour . . .

This was the cultural renaissance let loose by Uday Shankar ! It swiftly worked bringing in its train, talent till then concealed and springing for outlet. Fifteen years ago dance, drama and song were taboo and restricted to a professional class until these pioneers (in which the Chattopadhyayas, Menaka and others have played an invaluable part) unlocked forces, drawing in the nation into these spheres of activity. To-day anyone can walk on the stage or splash on the screen, almost with impunity ! The forgotten and neglected art of the people has thus been revived, thanks to the efforts of these gallant and convention-wrecking pioneers !

The Uday Shankar India Culture Centre at Almora, at the foot of the Himalayas and Menaka's Dance Academy at Khandala, on top of the Western Ghats, supply the long left needs of anxious artistes. Thanks to the generosity of Alice Boner, a Swiss artist-admirer of Shankar and the initial drive of his first Indian impresario, Haresh Ghosh, the Almora Centre offers unique opportunities to the Indian student. Uday Shankar is the soul of Indian dancing and his body is resplendent at the foot of those hills facing the Himalayas. Europe started Uday Shankar on his career as a dancer and Almora converted him into a thinker; thereby he established his title to lasting fame. He roved into the wilderness of Malabar and mastered the dance technique of that southern-most part of Hindustan styled as the *Kathakali*. To his pupils he imparted the best instruction at the hands of the experts from Malabar headed by the leading guru, Shankaran Namboodry.

The dance-items of Uday Shankar constitute a parade of beauty and festival of unalloyed joy. Its impressions

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

are a series of poetic visions, full of beauty, colour and music. His art presents the finest ideals embodied in the ancient monumental *Natya Shastra*. Through perfect gestures, he transforms the ageless ideals of that treatise into living realities. He shows the most perfect mastery of the *mudras* and proves that his art is both classical and Indian. As the Snake Charmer, Shankar makes you feel that he is handling a live snake. The Ras Leela and the Peasants' Dances are exquisitely executed, with a gay abandon and artistry that is bewitching. In the Radha-Krishna dance number, Shankar and Simkie excite the envy of the gods by their delightful performance. Debdra, Shankar's brother, dances the Hunter's dance with exceptional agility and virility. The *Shiva-Parvati Nritya Dvandva* number is a brilliant, gorgeous spectacle of beauty in continuous motion, with every significant mood impressing itself indelibly on the mind. It is the *piece de resistance* of Shankar's show. Dancing through nine different sentiments, it is the longest number of his repertoire. It portrays the entire gamut of emotions, from the tranquil to the terrible, from the pathetic to the erratic, from the frivolous to the heroic. Each gesture is a step of lingering beauty. Shankar excels himself in this grand item and Simkie is marvellous to behold, with every one of her gestures forming cycles of beauty. Her final pose of Parvati seems so authentic that she recalls to memory the sculptured goddess on temple pillars. Uday Shankar moves as the incensed god out to vanquish his consort. Has not Goldsmith long ago versed :

The dancing pair, that simply sought renown,  
By holding out, to tire each other down.

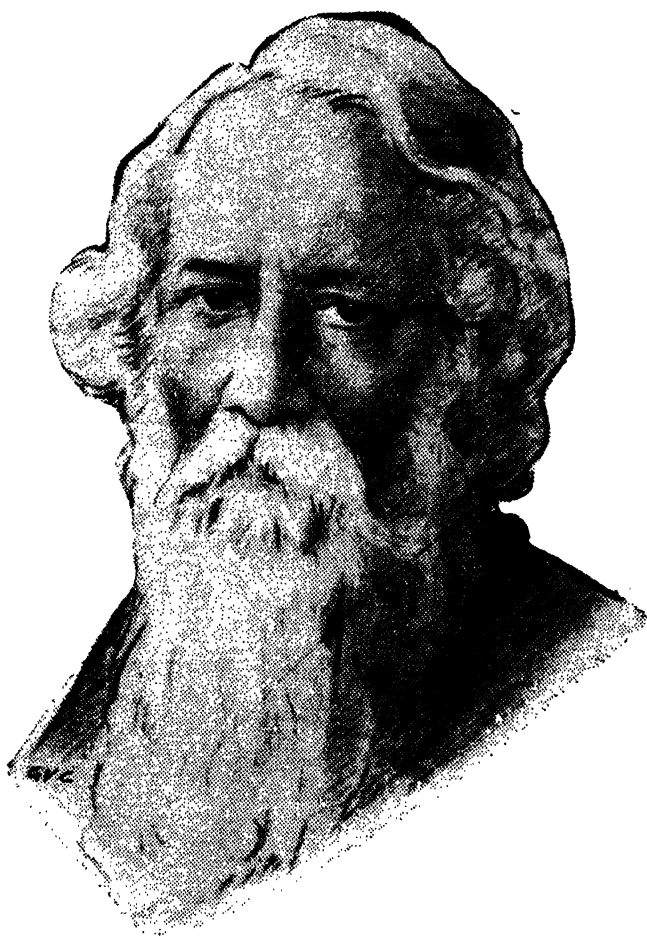
Let us not forget the Orchestra. Vishnudas Shirali, the present writer's friend and "Karnatak countryman" is a leader with vision, with full command of his instruments. Somebody has started that Uday Shankar's orchestra constitutes two-thirds of his triumphs. Shirali's music in the grand number reaches its perfection. The sound of Shirali's

orchestral melodies never die. It is our best orchestra and the country has nothing better to offer. Shirali's Orchestra is the background and canvass of all the Shankar-Simkie numbers. The members of the Orchestra under the leadership of Shirali skilfully play their parts to the last note.

Menaka (the wife of Col. Sokhey, the head of the Haffkine Research Institute in Bombay—a personality immortalised in Louis Bromfield's novel, *Night in Bombay*) the winner of the International Dance Olympiad Trophy at Berlin, Ramgopal, the dancing sensation of New York who rendered fifty performances to crowded theatres in the American capital without the accompaniment of an orchestra, Rukminidevi Arundale, the graceful champion of Bharat Natya, gifted Natraj Vasi, Sadhona Bose, who charmingly danced her way into an international English film, Kanaklata, Shankar's accomplished cousin, Zora and Uzra Begum, the rare acquisition of Shankar's troupe, Enakshi Rama Rao, that Master of Arts degree-holder who trailed the path for College girls, Pooviah sisters, who danced in students circles, Mrs. Soumendra Tagore *nee* Shrimati Hutheesingh (recently jailed) who led the feminine way amongst Gujaratis, noted for their patronage of Indian dancing, Miravatidevi, Menaka's artiste-sister, Sunalini-devi (Sarojini Naidu's sister) and Sunitadevi, the two effective danseuses who graced Harindranath Chattopadhyaya's Revue. Mahendrakumar Mody, that promising young dancer under twenty-one, and Tagore's Art Players from Shantiniketan—all these artistes constitute the galaxy of shining lights of the world of Indian dancing, with Uday Shankar at the head of them all! To all these, and to several other dancers and danseuses, known and many, many more unknown and undiscovered talents, Indian Art and Culture, owes an imperishable debt of gratitude. They have gallantly revived our ancient Art and Culture, whose light otherwise would have remained still concealed under a hard, unliftable bushel!







**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**



## RABINDRANATH TAGORE

**I**T was Napoleon when not pressed with the glories and defeats of the battlefield or pre-occupied with making the laws of France stated soberly that if he could write a country's songs, he would not care who wrote its laws. Therein lies the secret of national songs, songs sung in unison, rousing the innermost soul of a nation, vanquished or triumphant. Songs can be the expression of victory or the last refuge of the oppressed.

Rabindranath Tagore wrote and sang numerous songs for the nation and the most famous of them all, *Jana Gana Mana* bids fair to vie with *Vande Mataram*, our treasured national anthem, or Iqbal's musical surge, *Hindustan Hamara*. Schubert wrote six hundred songs besides operas and he was famed as the greatest song writer of Europe. Tagore beat his record and composed more than two thousand songs, set to music by himself, the music of Bengal which for sheer melody and sweetness, is unmatched in India. His songs have been sung on the highways and rivers, the jungles and the mountains of Hindustan. The poor and the humble have hummed his tunes, not knowing their composer. Shrimati Sarojini Naidu has instanced the case of Montague, who whilst touring Bengal as the "Great Mogul of Whitehall," in his capacity as the Secretary of State for India was immensely fascinated by a song whilst out hunting in the jungle. He made enquiries of those forlorn singers as to whose song it was. They were unable to give any explanation; but the soul of Tagore had made an indelible impression on them all. A good song it was, which became a part of national heritage, the possession of the common people. When the tide of Indian Nationalism was sweeping the land three decades ago like a breeze from the Himalayas during the early days of Bengal Partition, Tagore's songs conveyed new life into the dead bones in the

valley. He threw himself heart and soul into the vortex of the nationalist movement though he later withdrew into his poetic seclusion. Music gave movement to his writings, its much needed vehicle of expression. .

It was by one of the most fortunate coincidences that Tagore should have first sung his patriotic songs at the house of one of the greatest national leaders just as Rouget de Lisle first sang his immortal *La Marseillaise* in the house of the Mayor of Marseilles. Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das, who was himself a poet of distinction, was at that time a struggling Barrister. His house drew all literary men fired with the new patriotism of Bengal. Shrimati Basant Devi, the beloved consort of the Deshbandhu still treasures one of the poet's manuscripts of a rousing song.

Sarojini Naidu, whom Bengal summoned to preside at its All-India Memorial Meeting at Calcutta to mourn the loss of Tagore, has testified to the popularity of Tagore's songs:—

“I remember him, at various stages of my life. When I was a very little girl in Hyderabad, my mother used to sing in a rich *mezzo-soprano* voice lyrics that moved me though I did not understand the tongue in which she sang. ‘It was a song of one Rabindranath Tagore,’ she told me. ‘Ravi Babu’ she said, ‘was the idol of all Bengal.’ She told me that all men and women sang the songs, the boatmen on the rivers, the peasants on the fields, the students in their schools, women at their household tasks, men doing their labours in cities and hamlets; everywhere they sang the songs of Rabindranath Tagore. If they were glad, spontaneously his songs rose to their lips; if they were sad, his songs were a sanctuary of broken hearts. Did men need inspiration, he inspired; if men needed to be rebuked in a gentle fashion, he rebuked them; and when his country was in distress, when his country saw dreams of freedom from every form of bondage, he held aloft the torch himself from which all eager hearts caught their own torches.”

Let us salute this great seer, poet, patriot, prince and philosopher of Hindustan who wrote and sang our greatest songs of freedom, love, truth and beauty, and wherever he sat there was enthroned the seat of Oriental Literature. He was the Superman of Hindustan, the Poet Laureate of the East, the first man of our race to be crowned with laurels in the Court of Literary Europe. He was the supreme intellectual aristocrat, whose words were vivid with the essence of the world's culture. He possessed in abundance all the major qualities of a great mind, and not only looked over the heads of all other men but looked beyond into the heart and mind of the whole human race, to whom the history of all peoples and nations constituted one whole chapter of the History of Man. There were no traces of intellectual squalor in him nor his ideas flitted from the slums and back alleys of human thought. He possessed the greatest virtue of looking above the bustle and din of this world to life beyond. He spread splendour about his personality and exemplified in his career all the four cardinal virtues enunciated by Plato: Truth, Courage, Temperance and Justice.

At one time Tagore's reputation soared so high that a Tagore cult and Tagore boom was spread around the world. Europe was perched on the top of a volcano, about to burst and drench humanity in a pool of blood. The Poet's *Gitanjali* appeared almost on the eve of the World War I when men's minds and hearts were overrun by the impending clash of steel. Tagore's soul spoke to a distressed world with a touching appeal, though its effect was wiped off by the declaration of the War. The Poet enjoyed a reputation and popularity which Shakespeare and Goethe did not enjoy in their own country and in their own lifetime. Tagore's plays were enacted in France, Germany and England and *de luxe* editions of his works decorated the libraries of all European celebrities. After the English translation of the Bengali works of the poet was published, his works were translated into almost every

language of the Continent, viz, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Norwegian, Danish, Polish and Czechoslovakian. Tagore's works were translated into more European languages than Indian. Professor Gilbert Murray hailed him in an open letter as the greatest poet of the age and one of the greatest thinkers of his generation.

Sarojini Naidu's excellent testimony must be reiterated in regard to the Tagore vogue in the West:—

"In the course of my travel all over the world, I found that the name of Tagore was the living symbol of India in every corner.

"I was passing one day through a hospital in Budapest—a surgical boarding house it was, I think, great many beds were lying there. People knew that I was coming and under every pillow a hand was put and a book was brought out and everybody said Tagore, Tagore and Tagore. The book was a new translation in Hungarian of one of Tagore's plays.

"One year I spent the winter in Scandinavia. You know that it is from Sweden that the Nobel Prize came to Tagore. So, naturally Sweden was full of Tagore and the Swedish lady, who translated *Gitanjali* before England had heard of Tagore, was one of my hostesses. And, of course everybody wanted to know about Tagore in Sweden. It was only when I passed on to Norway on the Norwegian mountain slopes where there were scattered farm-houses and where farm-houses were snow-bound during winter and where in those little solitary houses cattle were tending and for nearly six months there was nothing but darkness—it was there that I found farmers in families—peasants living by provision for aeons throughout the winter, with the collected works of Rabindranath.

"Passing through France, Germany and Italy I found there was Tagore every where. In America and Canada they wanted to know about Tagore. In East Africa where savage tribes lived they know that there was a man—a great god they thought he was—called Tagore. He had reached the hearts of the primitive. There was no country in the world where they had not heard of Tagore. Only a passport officer, apparently, on the frontier of the

U.S.A. and Canada had not heard of Tagore. Tagore's passport got mislaid and though people told the Passport Officer that it was Tagore, the officer said that he wanted to see the passport. He thought that Tagore was an old fad. He had not heard of Tagore but the rest of the civilised world knew Tagore.

"I happened to be in England when *Gitanjali* was published. My great friend, the great Irish poet of this generation, William B. Yeats, was mad when he read *Gitanjali* in translation. He absolutely went mad. He thought there was the greatest message of hope for which the heart-sick and the soul-sick were so long waiting. When Tagore came to England in 1913, very beautiful with beard and locks and robe, the whole of cold England became warmed up in the sun of his song. We saw spectacles, sometimes comic, but very sincere, of five old ladies sitting in a row in a bus and reading *Gitanjali*. Funny spectacles were witnessed in unexpected places. These were a great tribute to the great Indian who by his genius exalted India like a star."

Tagore's poetry possessed the unique background of his personality, nurtured and trained by his own aristocratic lineage, the politics of his own Motherland, the effect of English poetry allied with the classic brilliance of the Sanskrit poems, the chants of the *Upanishads* and the devotion of the Vaishnav poets. All these forces paid their homage at Tagore's poetic shrine, where

"Even a blade of grass or an atom of dust brought a message from the unknown. To him every flower is a symbol of worship, every garland a *gitanjali*, every forest a temple, and every hill-top God's dwelling place."

This was the kind of world that Tagore made familiar to the West. His poetry is marked with all "thou"s, for he frequently communicated with a "thou" who was either his friend, lover or king. Poetry and religion had been one and the same thing to Hindustan throughout the centuries; *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the two greatest epics of the Motherland had left a common heritage for every man and woman and child in the country, of every class and calling.



Tagore freely used this background, making everything intelligible to the common man and the stranger in the West. His poetic genius clothed superstition and irrational forms of faith with reasoning and a sense of reality. He transcended provincial and national boundaries and fraternized with the world literature. He was an authority on metre; yet rules of prosody did not worry him. He cared more for the melody and sweetness of light than for the mere dead forms of regulations. There was an exceedingly mystic quality in his poems though the logic in them sometimes defied all syllogistic rules. He spoke what he felt and his poems were the outcome of the unrestrained urges of his imagination.

His was the voice that was raised in emphatic and dignified protest when imperious and imperial Marquis Curzon partitioned the province of Bengal. A whole nation rose in revolt and finally undid the wrong. When protest assumed the face of stern violence he gradually dropped out. However, he ruthlessly exposed the hand that made slaves of us all. One of the characters in his *Gora* makes the revealing statement:—

“You must really begin to understand that a strong fellow across the sea does not bow his head in shame, when you catch him in the act of house breaking. On the contrary he raises his crow bar on you with all the assurance of innocence itself.”

Tagore condemned the imperialist bandits who cut the roots of the pagoda tree of Indian wealth. He was out to destroy the complicated machine, which was devoid of human sympathy. He detested the prevalent philosophy of survival as fit for a world of tigers. He preferred and loved to recall the days of the Moghul rulers in contrast to those of the present. They were then no tigers, nor birds of prey. They did not establish a scientifically efficient system of government in this country; for they left room for human sympathy and understanding. The Moghuls needed money and so long as they got money, they left undisturbed

the ancient and progressive village communities and the other excellent forms of indigenous effort. Tagore frankly admitted that the Moghul rulers did not claim to be efficient rulers but they fitted into the stream of national life and became a part of the nation. Tagore felt that we had reached the breaking point of our relations with Imperial Britain. He had talked of a "Quit India" campaign long before the Mahatma had spoken of it. The Poet Laureate of Asia once bluntly addressed the authorities, *Name your price, get out and leave us alone!* When the Jallianwalla massacre was perpetrated in the Punjab, he boldly renounced his knight-hood and set a classic example to the whole tribe of title-hunters. The selfish seekers of honours inwardly felt ashamed of their blue-ribboned appendages and for once felt the moral superiority of the Indian claim as against the mere physical superiority of British hegemony in this country. Spurning the knighthood conferred on him, Tagore declared:—

"Such terrible eruptions of evil leave their leagacy of the wreckage of ideals behind them. What happened in Jallianwalla Bagh was itself a monstrous progeny of a monstrous war which for four years had been defiling God's world with fire and poison, physical and moral.... bred callousness in the minds of those who had power in their hands with no check of sympathy within, or fear of resistance without. The cowardliness of the powerful who owned no shame in using their machines of frightfulness upon the unarmed and unwarned villagers, and inflicting unspeakable humiliations upon their fellow beings behind the screen of an indecent mockery of justice.... This disruption of the basis of civilisation will continue to produce a series of moral earthquakes and men will have to be ready for still further sufferings.....when brother spills the blood of his brother and exults in his sin, giving it a high sounding name; when he tries to keep the blood stains fresh on the soil as a memorial of his anger, then God in shame conceals it under his green grass and the sweet purity of His flowers. We have witnessed the wholesale slaughter of innocents in our neighbourhood.....

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

Let those, who wish, try to burden the minds of the future with stones, carrying the black memory of wrongs and their anger; but let us bequeath to the generations to come memorials of that only which we can revere.....let us be grateful to our forefathers, who have left us the image of Buddah, who conquered self, preached forgiveness and spread his love far and wide in time and space."

The poet raised his voice again, and for the last time, in just anger against the so-called appeal issued to India by Miss Eleanor Rathbone, the British woman M.P. This retort was made a few months before his death:—

"The lady has ill-served the cause of her people by addressing so indiscreet, indeed impertinent, a challenge to our conscience.

"It is sheer insolent self-complacence on the part of our so-called English friends to assume that had they not "taught" us we should still have remained in the dark ages.

"Through the official British channels of education in India have flowed to our children in schools not the best of English thought but its refuse, which has only deprived them of a wholesome repast at the table of their own culture.

"I look around and see famished bodies crying for bread. I have seen women in villages dig up mud for a few drops of drinking water, for wells are even more scarce in Indian villages than schools.

"I look around and see riots raging all over the country. When crores of Indian lives are lost, our property looted, our women dishonoured, the mighty British arms stir in no action. Only the British voice is raised from overseas to chide us for our unfitness to put our house in order....

"How could I help thinking that it was India that had kept replenishing the coffers of the British people.....

"The blackest of evils that had come in the wake of British administration was much more than the rulers' neglect and apathy to provide the minimum amenities of civilised existence.

"It is now no longer possible for us to retain any respect for the mockery of civilisation which believes in ruling by force and has no faith in freedom at all.

"I had one time believed that the springs of civilisation would issue out of the heart of Europe, but today when I am about to quit the world the stubborn faith has gone bankrupt altogether."

Tagore had long ago expressed his inborn faith in the cause of his Motherland:—

"I shall be born in India again and again with all her poverty, misery and wretchedness. I love India best. Blessed is my birth because I was born in this country, blessed is my life, Mother, because I have loved thee."

Tagore was equally unsparing in the condemnation of his own countrymen. With the British he held us as the joint perpetrators of our wrongs. He has laid bare all our fatal weaknesses. He recognized that we had played havoc with our destinies and our greatest enemy was within us. We are crushed under "the insult of bondage" and swayed to and fro by "the throne of untruth." He has spotted the weakness, which betrays our soul:—

"The gigantic monster of reason and superstition, caste prejudices and bigotry, which are more potent in their malignity than any power represented by strangers across the seas....when the Sudra joined his palms in submission to the brahamanical decree of inferiority, on that very day was dug the pit for the fall of the Brahmins .....So long as we out of personal and collective ignorance, cannot treat our countrymen properly like men, so long as our landlords regard their tenants as a mere part of their property, so long as the strong in our country will consider it the eternal law to trample on the weak, the higher castes despise the lower as worse than beasts, even so long we cannot claim gentlemanly treatment from the English.....God has created men differing from each other's ideas and actions with a variety of beliefs and customs, but fundamentally one in their humanity....The soul of the caste system has departed and what India is now worshipping with awe and inspiration, is a corpse."

## MEN & SUPERMEN OF HINDUSTAN

Tagore was unequivocal in his condemnation of his countrymen when he spoke through Anandmoi, that noble woman in *Gora* who cast off all caste distinctions:—

“If you alone are the elect of God, what has made you to grovel in the dust first before the Pathans, then before the Moghuls and now before the Christians?”

Tagore did not lose sight of his means. He condemned violence and put forward the correct perspective in his last article entitled *A Reverie*:—

“So the mind must question.....what is the true purpose of this great order of creation. Is the end of its dervish dance of violence merely the ashes of the mighty funeral pyre on some bloodstained field of Kurukshetra? We read in history of the coming of Tartars, Pathans, Moghuls, each claiming to raise their victorious standard to the highest point of human glory. With shouts of triumph they proclaimed nothing above themselves. But where are they today, and to what does that victorious standard witness as it lies in the dust?”

Echoing these sentiments, a savant from the West exclaimed :—

Asia, teach us thy wise way of living. And from us learn to act.

“Asia’s idealism is in danger if you do not save. Beware, lest the great Nemesis turns against you by Asia’s hands, the imperialism of lucre and violence with which you have armed her. Asia’s moral degradation will cause your ruin. Her uplifting will be your salvation.”

Asia is weighted with the wisdom of the ages. Europe did not forget to unearth the treasures of the East, yet she made no attempt to arm herself with the peace, serenity and contentment of the East. The wall of self-satisfied contentment was no barrier against the threatened crack-up from within. The West was tempting civilisation into suicide, as the disarmed of the world, pitted against the might of the mailed fisted ones, were helpless and invoked the ven-

geance from the throne of justice and truth. Tagore felt that politicians in their quest for power and glory ignored the vision of the third eye to see the great invisible hand that clasps the hand of the helpless and waits for retribution. It was difficult for the East to acknowledge the best in Western civilisation when they were humiliated by the forces of Western Imperialism. He hoped that time forces of Western Imperialism. He hoped that time would come when the West would feel ashamed of its tyrannical strength and make graceful amends. But his cry was a cry in the wilderness for he stated that the divinity in man was continuously outraged by the powers that be. The world was perched on the top of a volcano.

Tagore's innermost voice cried in the *Fruit-Gathering* :—

“All the black evils in world have overflowed their banks.....

“The heat growing in the heart of God for ages,

“The cowardice of the weak, the arrogance of the strong, the greed of fat prosperity, the rancour of the wronged, pride of race, and insult to man,

“Has burst God's peace, raging in storm.”

Acknowledging his debt of gratitude to the West he summed up :—

“When I was young, we were all full of admiration for Europe, with its high civilisation and its vast scientific progress, and especially for England, which had brought this civilisation to our doors.....this fired our youthful imagination. We believed with all our simple faith that even if we rebelled against foreign rule we should have the sympathy of the West. We felt that England was on our side in wishing us to gain our freedom. But there came a rude awakening. We came to know at close quarters the Western mentality in its unscrupulous aspect of exploitation.....However let it be clearly under-

stood in the West that we who are born in the East still acknowledge in our heart of hearts the greatness of European civilisation. Even in our weakness and humiliation, we aggressively try to deny this what we still inwardly accept.....The West brought to Asia not only Science which is Truth and therefore welcome, but also the impious use of Truth for the violent purpose of self-seeking . . . True modernism is freedom of mind, not slavery of taste. It is independence of thought and action, not tutelage under European schoolmasters.....We must recognize that it is providential that the West has come to India and yet someone must show the East to West, and convince the West that the East has her contribution to make to the history of civilisation. India is no beggar to the West. And yet even though the West may think she is, I am not for thrusting Western civilisation and becoming segregated in our independence....Let us have a deep association of the best minds of the East and the West."

Thus it was in the fitness of things that a special Convocation of the Oxford University was held at Shantiniketan when the Chief Justice of the Federal Court of India, Sir Maurice Gwyer, on behalf of the Oxford University conferred an honorary degree on the Poet. Sir Maurice whilst conferring the degree spoke in Latin and the Poet thanked in Sanskrit. Minerva and Saraswati had truly come down together to this earth to sow their seeds of learning in such cordial unison; though one wonders whether Gwyer understood the Poet and the latter understood the former or not, when each addressed the other in their classic tongues.

Tagore delivered a stern warning to his own countrymen against the evils of aggressive nationalism :—

"Nationalism is not enough for the great ideal nationalists of young India. Patriotism is a parochial interest. Superior souls have finer roles to fill.....the flowering of humanity is worth more for us than the victory of a part....the chosen people of the future cannot be a nation but an aristocracy of the earth. Let us unite the energy of European action with the serenity of Asiatic thought.....

Let not our young men render themselves intellectually untouchable in the civilised community. They ought to know that only the mind that is crudely primitive suspiciously barricades itself against all contact of truth..... Such a mind may be compared to the fiercely unreceptive desert which allows rain clouds from alien horizon to pass over it without drawing its due share of tribute from them. Man's highest privilege is to be able to claim as his rightful inheritance all that is great and true, appearing in any part of his world and at any period of his history."

No wonder, no school or university could claim such a great seer like Tagore as its *alumni* ! If one took a census of the greatest of world's men and women, one would be surprised to discover that the majority of them owed very little to universities or indeed to any educational system. Tagore never crossed the threshold of a university and proved in himself the truth of the charge embodied in an Emersonian aphorism that universities are hostile to genius. Tagore was a lovely little fellow when a school-boy, though he had not the benefit of a school education. His *Crescent Moon* mirrored his faith and love of the Indian childhood. Children fascinated him like all the other great teachers of mankind. He wrote stories for them, played and danced with them and engraved his fondness for them in perpetuity by founding his famous school of Shantiniketan. As a small boy Tagore suffered the average temptation of looking famous in the eyes of his mother. He had also never come across the name of a school boy whose name appeared in print; least dreaming that his name would one day be known to every school boy on the surface of the globe. As a boy of school-going age he had realised for all time that "boys are up to all kinds of mischief, for boys will be mischievous and school masters unforgiving." From his very boyhood, he evaded school-masters. He wrote in his profound *Reminiscences* that

"When any of us are beset with undue uneasiness at their conduct and are stirred into a resolution to deal out condign punishment, the misdeeds of my own schooldays



confront me in a row and smile at me. I now clearly see that the mistake is to judge boys by the standard of grown-ups, to forget that a child is quick and mobile like a running stream; and that, in the case of such, any touch of imperfection need cause no great alarm for the spread of the flow is itself the best corrective.....So it is for the teacher, more than the pupil, to beware of wrongdoing."

Tagore thus did not take kindly to school and hence the family entrusted him to the celebrated Jesuits, the last hope in the world of undisciplined boys! Tagore went over to St. Xavier's at Calcutta and he has preserved for our benefit the memory of some of those model teachers of youth in the pages of his *Reminiscences*. The memory of a kind word from one of the Jesuit fathers was treasured by Tagore for years together. Father De Pereneda, he liked most, "whose spirit seemed to be in prayer and a deep peace seemed to pervade him within and without." His recollection gave him "a passport into the silent seclusion of the temple of God."

The Poet created amid the beautiful natural setting of Shantiniketan, the peace and beauty of nature, the song and dance of the countryside, with the flute and other musical instruments to commune with his Creator. His was the greatest attempt to gather the pearls of wisdom for young boys and girls from the storehouse of Nature. Amidst the beautiful and cool shade of the mango grove, sat the wise and the learned, of all ages and climes. No school rooms weighed down the pupils, nor fear of punishment. Open air surroundings instilled the purest joy and untainted freedom amongst all the young ones there. This fostered creative talent and the comradeship of humanity. Tagore scrambled for no fame in his venture but was governed by the paramount urge of making children happy, unrestrained by rules and regulations. He was the soul of the institution and before he died entrusted its care to Mahatma Gandhi. Though it is not a university, Shanti-

niketan bids fair to be known to posterity like Oxford and Cambridge, Sorbonne and the Harvard. It was founded forty years ago with ancient India as its background. The school was the materialisation of the Poet's intense desire from his very childhood to escape from the prison of classroom walls and fetters of mere academic study. Ample space and pure air, surrounded with the profound peace of nature, enabled Shantiniketan to draw upon the knowledge of the world. It was a veritable Abode of Peace, away from the din of the world where the simplicity of life reigned in all its pristine purity and greatness. Tagore taught the supreme lesson to all of us that every child is a poet and every poet is a child.

Tagore's appreciation of some of the excellent features in the Soviet system despite his marked differences in others cannot be left untouched. He had been greatly drawn towards the Soviet Government since his first acquaintance with Russia. It was as he stated that foreign greed and the indifference resulting therefrom that had driven him to despair and forced him to undertake a visit to Russia, when Europe offered little solace to his mentally tortured soul. On setting foot in Russia, the first thing that struck him was the peasants' and workers' community and the spread of education amongst the masses of Russian citizens. He believed that all human problems find their solution in the kind of education they imparted. The agricultural conditions in Russia impressed the Poet most. He admired the way the lowly and the oppressed, the helpless and downtrodden of the Czarist days were rescued and elevated into proper layers of human progress in the State. The Russian scene forced the Poet to put the query to the Simon Commission, then touring India, as to whether they had demonstrated by statistics the comparative amount spent by the British Government upon supplying the Police with batons and affording education to the people, whose skulls are amenable to the baton! However, the Poet fail-

ed not to raise his voice in protest against the rampant exercise of violence. Violence bred violence and the brute could not subdue the brute!

On his completing his eightieth birthday, Tagore delivered a memorable address entitled *Crisis in Civilisation*, wherein he spoke :—

“I am about to quit this world. I have also been privileged to witness whilst in Moscow the unsparing energy with which Russia had tried to fight disease and illiteracy and has succeeded in steadily liquidating ignorance and poverty, wiping off the humiliation from the face of a vast continent. Her civilisation is free from all invidious distinctions between one class and another, between one sect and another. When I see elsewhere some two hundred nationalities, which only a few years ago were at vastly different stage of development, marching ahead in peaceful progress and amity, and when I look about my country and see a very highly evolved and intellectual people drifting into disorder and barbarism, I cannot help contrasting the two systems of government, one based on co-operation, the other on exploitation, which have made such contrary conditions possible.”

That utterance was made long before England and America rushed into the arms of Russia, in June 1941 !

Tagore delivered his final message to the West before he died :—

“The failure of humanity in the West to preserve the worth of civilisation and dignity of man which they had taken centuries to build up, weighs like a nightmare on my mind. It seems clear to me that this failure is due to men's repudiation of moral values in the guidance of their national affairs and to their belief, that everything is determined by the mere physical chain of events. The first experiment in this diabolical faith was launched in Manchukuo. Those who built their power on moral cynicism are themselves proving its victims. The nemesis is daily proving more ruthless.”

## RABINDRANATH TAGORE

This Prince of Poets, this great Philosopher and Superman of Hindustan finally bade adieu to this world in the following grand and immortal fashion :—

“I have got my leave. Bid me farewell, my brothers! I bow to you all and take my departure.

“Here I give back the keys of my door—and I give up all claims to my house, I only ask for last kind words from you.

“We were neighbours for long, but I received more than I could give. Now the day has dawned and the lamp that lit my dark corner is out. A summons has come and I am ready for my journey.”

## DATE OF ISSUE

This book must be returned within 3, 7, 14 days of its issue. A fine of ONE ANNA per day will be charged if the book is overdue.

---

--	--

